N. Malebranche (F.)
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Christian Conferences:

DEMONSTRATING

The TRUTH

OF THE

Christian Religion

AND

MORALITY.

By *F. MALEBRANCHE.*

To which is Added

His MEDITATIONS

ON

HUMILITY and *REPENTANCE.*

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TO THE READER.

THE *many pious Reflections which the Author of* The Search after Truth *makes in that admirable Book, justly induc'd him to believe that they might be of use to demonstrate the Truth of Christian Religion by evident Reasons. Those who follow* Des Cartes *will doubtless allow this to be true; for nothing is set down there but what is plainly prov'd, or what is an axiom universally granted. Now as it is of great importance to convince all sorts of Persons of the Conformity of the Christian Religion with Reason, This Author judged that the following Dialogues might be use-*

ful to that end; Since these Philosophers ought not to be neglected. But 'tis also hop'd that many others, not satisfied with the Proofs deduc'd from old Philosophy, will be convinc'd by those that are given here; provided these Dialogues be read with all the attention that is requisite to understand a work of this Nature. This is all that is desired of them, for a serious Application of the mind undoubtedly produces Light.

It may not be improper to answer a Thing which some Persons might think amiss in the management of this Work; they might say that our young Eraſtus *is too learned and answers Theodorus with two much strength and Judgment, considering his unripe Years which are represented to be between Fifteen and Twenty. But these Gentlemen may observe that our Author supposes* Eraſtus *to be altogether free from Prejudice; and this ought to be supposed, since* Theodorus *and* Ariſtarchus *chuse him Judge of their differences: They may also con-*

conſider that when Eraſtus *ſpeaks afterwards above his Years, tis only ſome things which he had read in* The Search after Truth. *And after all, the Deſign of Chriſtian Dialogues is not that of certain writings made only to indulge the Imagination, but rather to inſtruſt the Mind; and 'tis much better that* Eraſtus *ſhould be admir'd for ſaying Things ſeldom ſpoken by thoſe of his Years, as they are now Educated, than that he ſhould give us occaſion to laugh at his Childiſhneſs, or at that Simplicity that ſo well expreſſes the Character of a young, raw Student.*

There are ſome few Paſſages in theſe Dialogues where the Author, who is known to be a Roman Catholic, has made his Interlocutors to ſpeak like Men of that Perſuaſion; But I did not think fit either to alter or omit any Thing; this being a bare Tranſlation which ought conſequently to repreſent the Original as much as Poſſible. Neither did did I think it neceſſary to confute thoſe

Paſſages

Paſſages: For, the Arguments uſed by the Roman Catholicks in behalf of their particalar Doctrines are ſo inconſiderable, if compared with thoſe which this Author has offer'd to prove the Truth of the Chriſtian Religion, that at this Day, they do not deſerve that Proteſtants ſhould loſe Time in confuting them.

As for the Tranſlators Part, if you can pardon ſome few Faults of Print and Galliciſms, of which ſuch Works are ſeldom wholly Free, he dares aſſure you that he has taken all imaginable Care to give here his Author's Sence juſt in its full Extent, and as cloſe and clear as it was poſſible in ſuch abſtracted Notions. 23 OC 62

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Christian

CHRISTIAN DIALOGUES.

DIALOGUE I.

That there is a God, and that none but him acts really in us, and can make us happy or miserable.

Aristarchus. I Must let you know, my dear *Theodorus*, how little satisfaction our late Conferences have yielded me: I have discours'd with you of my Travels, and several adventures of my last Campaigns; you know them all, do not ask me any more of them. You told me a word yesterday, which made such an impression on me, that I am become insensible to all the things that have hitherto extreamly moved me: I find their Emptiness and their Vanity, and will have solid Enjoyments and certain Truths.

Theodorus. Give thanks, *Aristarchus*, to your deliverer, to him that breaks your bonds, and changes your heart. I have spoke a long time to your ears, but at last he that put words into my mouth, hath made you understand their meaning. You have seen Truth,

and you love it; you desire to see it more plainly, that you may love it more fervently.

Think not, *Aristarchus*, that what enlightens, you and creates in you the desire you feel now, is a word spoke in the air, which only affects the body, or the *sensible man*, uncapable of understanding. How many times have I told you the same things, without convincing you of them? I spoke then to your ears, but the light of truth did not shine in your mind: or rather, since that Light is always within us, it did shine in your mind, but it did not enlighten it. Being out of your self, you hearken'd to a man who only spake to the Body. You were in Darkness, and would not turn your self towards him, who alone can disperse it.

Learn then, my dear *Aristarchus*, to retire within your self, to be attentive to Inward Truth; to ask, and receive the answers of our common Master; for without it I assure you all my words will be barren, fruitless, and like all those I have told you already, which you hardly can remember.

Aristarchus. I am willing to do my endeavour to follow you, but I fear I shall not be able to do it; for I have much ado to understand well the things you have told me now.

Theod. In the Passion that moves you now, you will not fail to give attention to all the things I'll tell you, but you shall not always understand them; your attention will hardly be pure enough, and your intention sufficiently free from Interest, to be always rewarded with the clear and distinct sight of Truth.

The attention of the mind is the natural Prayer we make to Inward Truth, that it may discover it self to us; but this Soveraign Truth doth not always answer

our

our expectation, for we do not know how to make our addreſſes: We often ask it queſtions without knowing what we ask; as when we go about to reſolve queſtions, whoſe terms we do not underſtand.

We ask it queſtions, and then leave it, not waiting for its anſwers; as when Impatience ſeizes us, and our Imagination is diſpleas'd that we think on things, that have no relation to the good of the body.

We ask it queſtions, and ſtrive to corrupt it, as when our Paſſions move us, and we will have its anſwers to agree with our opinions.

In ſhort, we ask it queſtions, we hear its anſwers, and do not underſtand them; as when our prejudices prepoſſeſs our mind, and it is fill'd with falſe Ideas, and our Imagination is utterly ſpoil'd by an infinite number of dark and confus'd notions, that continually repreſent all things to us with reſpect to our ſelves. Then God ſpeaks and the body alſo, reaſon and imagination, the mind and the ſenſes; there ariſes a confuſed noiſe, and nothing can be heard. Darkneſs mixes it ſelf with Light, and nothing can be ſeen. For we cannot always diſcern what God tells us *Immediately*, and through himſelf to unite us to truth, from what he tells us through our body to unite us to ſenſible things.

The various Imployments of your Life have fill'd your mind with a great number of prejudices, that have imprinted on it a certain Character much eſteem'd in the world, which is but as a Seal that faſtens thoſe prejudices on our minds. You have read much the Books of certain Scepticks, who are proud of doubting of all things, and yet ſpeak of them peremptorily; and I fear that, like them, you will have me hereafter prove you common notions, and receive

as principles, opinions altogether unknown to the greatest part of mankind.

It is also much to be fear'd, that your travels have too much dispers't your thoughts, and given your mind too much of the Court-air, to let you hear with attention some things altogether unknown amongst Travellers and Military men.

You do not believe at present that your Studies and Travels have corrupted your reason, and prepossess'd you with many unreasonable opinions. You have some cause not to believe it, and I will not undertake to convince you of it yet. But that hereafter we may reconcile our differences, let us take for a third a young man, whom the conversation of the World hath not yet spoilt, that Nature alone may speak in him, and we may find who of us two is prepossess'd. Methinks *Eraſtes* who heard us t'other day, would be very fit for this: I observ'd by his countenance that he often consulted within himself to examine our sentiments with those of his Conscience, and always approv'd of the most reasonable; tho he us'd to stand as it were amaz'd and surpriz'd, without judging of any thing, when ever he heard you relate certain things which you have read in Books.

Ariſt. You do him a great deal of honour at my cost, but I can find no fault with it; that young man is so *lovely*, that besides the tye of blood, I have all the reason in the world to be glad of the esteem you have of his Wit. I freely consent: But here he comes in very good time.

Eraſtes. Gentlemen, will you be pleas'd to do me the same favour you did me lately? Will you give me leave to stay here?

Ariſt.

Ariſt. With all our hearts, *Eraſtus*; we were thinking to ſend for you.

I have juſt now told you my reſolution, *Theodorus*, and you approve of it: Let us Philoſophize, I pray you, but let it be after a Chriſtian and ſolid manner. Inſtruct me of the Truths, that are eſſential and moſt capable of rendering us happy.

How would you prove that there is a God, for I believe that 'tis by this we ought to begin.

Theod. The Exiſtence of God may be prov'd a thouſand ways, for there is nothing but may ſerve to demonſtrate it; and I wonder how a perſon of your parts, ſo well read in Antiquity, and ſo accompliſht every way, ſeems not to be convinc'd of it.

Ariſt. I am convinc'd of it by Faith, but I muſt confeſs I am not fully convinc'd of it by Reaſon.

Theod. If you ſpeak as you think, you are convinc'd of it neither by reaſon, nor by Faith. For do you not know that the aſſurance of Faith comes from the authority of a God that ſpeaks, and who can never deceive us. If then you are not convinc'd by reaſon that there is a God, how will you be convinc'd that he hath ſpoke? Can you know that he hath ſpoke, without knowing that he is? And can you know that the things which he hath reveal'd us are true, without knowing that he is Infallible, and never deceives us.

Ariſt. I do not examine things ſo narrowly; and the reaſon why I believe it, is becauſe I will believe it, and that I have been told ſo all my life. But let us ſee your proofs.

Theod. Your Faith hath much of the man in it, and your anſwers ſhew much Indifference. I deſign'd to give you the moſt ſimple and natural proofs of the Exiſtence of God, but I find by the diſpoſition of

your mind, they would not be the moſt convincing: You muſt have ſenſible proofs. Here are many things about us; which of them ſhall I make uſe of to prove you that there is a God? Shall it be this Fire that delights us? this Light that illuminates us? the nature of Words, by whoſe means we diſcourſe together? for, as I told you juſt now, there is nothing but may ſerve to ſhew the exiſtence of its Author, provided we conſider it with all poſſible attention.

God acts inceſſantly in and by all his works: 'Tis he that illuminates us by this outward light, that delights us by the warmth of this fire, and diſcourſes with us when we think we converſe together. God neither produces nor preſerves any creature, but which may cauſe thoſe to know him who make good uſe of their reaſon. I will convince you of it preſently: In the mean time, *Eraſtus*, take heed that neither of us prepoſſeſs you.

Anſwer me, *Ariſtarchus*, What doth Fire do in you?

Ariſt. It warms me.

Theod. Then Fire cauſes a pleaſure in you?

Ariſt. I own it.

Theod. What cauſes in us ſome pleaſure, makes us in ſome meaſure happy.

Ariſt. It is true.

Theod. Then what makes us in ſome manner happy, is in ſome manner our good; and in ſome manner above us; and deſerves in ſome manner love and veneration. What think you of it, *Eraſtus*, is Fire in ſome manner above you? Can Fire act in you? Can it cauſe in you a pleaſure it hath not, it feels not, it knows not, and cauſe it in you, that is to ſay, in a Spirit, in a being infinitely above it?

Eraſt.

Eraſt. I do not think ſo.

Theod. See then, *Ariſtarchus*, what you have to anſwer.

Ariſt. You conclude too faſt: And I ſee what you drive at. I diſtinguiſh, Fire cauſes heat, but it doth not cauſe pleaſure. Pleaſure is a ſentiment of the Soul, which the Soul cauſes in it ſelf: When its body is well diſpos'd, the Soul rejoyces at it, and its joy is its pleaſure; but Fire cauſes the heat we feel; for as it contains it in it ſelf, it can diſperſe it without.

Theod. Can you conceive, *Eraſtus*, that your Soul cauſes in it ſelf its pleaſure, and cauſes it when it knows its body is well diſpos'd? Can you know what changes happen now to your body? Doth the pleaſure you receive when you warm your ſelf, delay its coming, till you find out what paſſes in your hands? Doth it ſtay alſo for the orders of your Soul? and do you feel that this depends from you as an effect depends from its cauſe? Do you alſo apprehend well that Fire really contains this heat you feel? This heat you only feel when your hands are out of the Fire; for whilſt your hands are in the Fire, which according to *Ariſtarchus*, contains heat, you do not feel it, but a very great pain, which perhaps is not in the Fire.

When you retire within your ſelf, to conſult your Reaſon, do you well conceive that Matter is capable of any modifications differing from Motion and Figure? Do you believe that it is by heat that Fire ſeparates the particles of Wood when it burns it? That by heat it agitates the particles of Water when it makes it boyl? That by heat it purifies Metals when it melts them? Extracts Water out of Mud

when it drys it? Drives with violence Cannon-balls, and overthrows by Mines the Walls of Cities, and the higheſt Towers? In ſhort, have you ever found in Fire ſome effect that may prove it is poſſeſſ'd of heat?

Eraſt. I confeſs I cannot eaſily underſtand how this heat I feel is capable of producing any of the effects you have now mention'd: And I cannot even ſee any relation between this heat, and any of the effects of Fire. I have ſufficiently experienc'd by its effects that Fire hath motion, but I have not found yet that it hath heat.

Theod. You will do well, *Ariſtarchus*, to conſider on what *Eraſtus* ſaid now: In the mean time hear the anſwers he will make me. If I held this Thorn hard upon your hand, *Eraſtus*, what ſhould I do to it?

Eraſt. As it is ſharp, I imagine you would make a hole in it.

Theod. What elſe ſhould I do to it?

Eraſt. If I ought to ſpeak but what I know, you would do nothing elſe to it.

Theod. But what ſhould you feel?

Eraſt. Perhaps I ſhould feel ſome pain.

Theod. This *Perhaps* is very Judicious. But if I drew this Feather over your Lips, what ſhould I do to them?

Eraſt. You ſhould move their fibres.

Theod. What elſe ſhould I do to them?

Eraſt. Nothing elſe.

Theod. But what ſhould you feel?

Eraſt. I don't know.

Theod. Try.

Eraſt. I feel a kind of a troubleſome pleaſure, which may be called Titillation.

Theod.

Theod. What think you, *Ariſtarchus*, of the anſwers of *Eraſtus*? Are they true? Can any falſe conſequence be directly deduced from them? He ſpeaks but what he underſtands from that Inward Maſter whom he faithfully conſults. Mark how he applys himſelf.

Let us go on, *Eraſtus*; What doth this fire produce in your hand?

Eraſt. Hold, Sir, I have ſeen them lay much Wood in the Chimney, this Wood is no more there; Then 'tis gone.

Ariſt. 'Tis burnt, 'tis annihilated.

Eraſt. That's a ſtory, annihilated——I did not ſee it go out; it muſt then have gone in inviſible particles. It could not go from thence without changing its place, that is to ſay without motion. The Wood then is continually divided, and its particles move themſelves from the Chimney towards my hands. Thoſe particles are bodys; they ſtrike againſt my hands. I have it, *Theodorus*. Fire without doubt moves the fibres of my hands.

Theod. Is that all *Eraſtus*?

Eraſt. 'Tis all I know. I ſay nothing but what I ſee. Am I to blame?

Theod. But, pray, do you feel nothing?

Eraſt. I feel ſome heat.

Theod. Come nearer the fire, yet nearer, a little more; what do you feel?

Eraſt. Some pain.

Theod. 'Tis enough. Whence proceeds this heat that pleaſes you, and this pain that ſcorches you? This heat that makes you more pleaſed and more happy, this pain that diſturbs you, and makes you in ſome manner unhappy?

Eraſt. I do not know it.

Theod.

Theod. Do you believe that fire is above you, and can make you happy or miserable?

Erast. No certainly. I only believe here what I see. I see that Fire can move variously the Fibres of my hand; for bodies may (methinks) act on bodies, but they cannot communicate sensations which they have not. Can a Thorn infuse pain by the little hole it makes in the flesh? Can a Feather spread titillation on my Lips when it goes over them. No, *Theodorus*, I do not believe that any one of all the bodies about me, is able to make me more happy or unhappy.

Theod. Well said, *Erastus*, I am sure you will never worship the Fire, nor even the Sun, You are already wiser than those famous *Chaldeans*, illustrious *Brachmanes* and ancient *Druids* who worship'd the Sun.

Erast. How! Were there ever men mad enough to esteem the Fire or the Sun as Deities?

Theod. Yes, *Erastus*. Not some Men or some Nations, but almost all Nations, and the most famous too, as the *Greeks*, the *Persians*, the *Romans*, and several others. You may be informed by *Aristarchus*, who hath read learned Books, he will talk with you whole days together of the different manners in which several Nations have worshipped Fire and the Sun.

Erast. I do not much care to know the follies of others. Be pleas'd to go on with your Questions.

Theod. I will presently, *Erastus*. But by the way, *Aristarchus*, have you compared your answers with those of *Erastus*? Have you observ'd how he applies himself, how he consults the Master that teaches him in the deepest recess of his reason, he never answers but after him, he warrants nothing but what he sees; and for that reason I defie you to draw directly any false consequences from his answers. But if you

mind

mind it, those that you made me before to the same questions, may in a manner justifie the Religion of those who place Fire, or the Sun among the Gods. For if Fire or the Sun can reward and punish you, make you happy or unhappy, they must be above you, they must have power over you, and you ought to pay submission to them; for it is an inviolable Law that inferiour things shall be subservient to superiour. I need tell you no more of it: I only assure you, that the *Pagans* never reasoned like *Eraſtus*, and that in all likelihood they argu'd like you, since we see by their Religion, that they have followed the same thred of consequences I have drawn now from your Answers.

Observe it, *Ariſtarchus*, when God speaks, when inward Truth answers, there is no creature but guides us to the Creator. You'll understand this well hereafter. But when we judge rashly of things, without consulting any other master than our imagination, or the doctrine of certain false-learned, 'tis impossible for us to come near God.

Ariſt. I can't express to you the pleasure I find in this new way of Philosophising. I rejoyce to see that Children and ignorant men are the most capable of true wisdom; and I am charm'd to learn from *Eraſtus* things on which I had not so much as thought before. His answers instruct me more than the high reasonings of our Philosophers; and methinks every word he speaks spreads in my mind a pure Light that doth not dazzle by its lustre, and yet disperses all my Darkness.

Theod. I will go on then with my questions to *Eraſtus*, since you are so well pleased with hearing him. Hear me my dear *Eraſtus*, you told me just now, that Fire can move variously the particles of your hand, because

bodies

bodies can act on bodies. You believe then that bodies have a power to move those they meet.

Eraſt. My Eyes tell me ſo, but my mind doth not tell me ſo yet, for I have not yet examined that queſtion.

Theod. Well then, anſwer me; Hath a body power to move it ſelf?

Eraſt. I do not believe it.

Theod. Is then the power that moves bodies diſtinguiſh'd from theſe bodies?

Eraſt. I don't know.

Theod. Take notice, *Eraſtus*, that I do not ſpeak of motion. The local motion of a body is a kind of being of that body, with reſpect to thoſe that are about it: I do not ſpeak of that, but of the power which cauſes it. I ask you if this power is ſomething that is corporeal, and if it is in the power of bodies to communicate it?

Eraſt. I do not believe it, for if it were any thing corporeal, it would not be able to move it ſelf. No, *Theodorus*, I do not believe that bodies can communicate to thoſe they meet, a power which they have not themſelves; a power they could not communicate though they had it: In ſhort, a power whoſe diffuſion and communication they could not be able to direct in a manner as regular as is that which we ſee; ſince bodies do not even know either the bigneſs or motion of thoſe they meet. It ſeems to me, that an intelligent being, and one and the ſame intelligent being, muſt produce and regulate all the motions of matter, ſince the communication of the motion is always the ſame in the ſame accidents. For all bodies or many intelligent beings, would not eaſily agree together to act always after the ſame manner in the communication of motions.

Arist: Methinks *Eraſtus* runs too faſt and loſes himſelf. For it ſeems to me, that thoſe things which are always done the ſame way, are not done by an intelligent being, but by a blind action, *cæco impetu naturæ.*

Theod. You miſtake your ſelf, *Eraſtus* is not out; and you ought not to attribute to a blind impetuoſity, that which comes from the immutability of the author of nature. I ſee you do not know that 'tis the mark of an excellent workman to produce admirable effects, by acting always after the ſame manner, and by the moſt *ſimple* means. I will not undertake to lead you to God that way; it is too difficult, and does not afford us a notion of God ſo uſeful to morality. I would diſcover him to you as the *Sole Author* of the felicity of the Juſt, and of the miſery of the Wicked, and in a word as being alone able to act in us. For I ought not only to demonſtrate to you that he is, (which certainly is but ſeldom doubted of) but I ought alſo to demonſtrate to you that he is our good in all reſpects, for that's a thing which is not ſufficiently known.

I return to *Eraſtus.* You are perſwaded, my dear *Eraſtus*, that neither Fire, nor the Sun, nor any one of thoſe bodies that ſurround you, are the true cauſes of what you feel at their preſence; and in this you are wiſer than all thoſe who have worſhipped Fire or the Sun. You do not even believe that bodies have any natural power to move thoſe they meet; and in that too you ſee more clearly than thoſe who worſhip the Heavens, the Elements, and all thoſe bodies which *Ariſtotle* call'd divine, becauſe he believed they had in them a power to move themſelves, and to produce by this motion all the good or evils whereof men are capable.

capable. But it is not ſufficient to know that bodies do not act on you, you muſt alſo diſcover the true cauſe of all that is produced in you. You feel warmth and pain at the preſence of Fire. Now Fire doth not produce this warmth and this pain in you. What muſt it be then *Eraſtus*?

Eraſt. I muſt confeſs to you that I know nothing of it.

Theod. Is it not your ſoul who acts on her ſelf; who afflicts her ſelf, when Fire ſeparates the particles of the body ſhe loves? or who rejoyces when the ſame fire produces in her body a motion proper to keep you alive, and help the circulation of the blood?

Eraſt. I do not believe it.

Theod. Why, Pray?

Eraſt. Becauſe the ſoul doth not know that the fire moves or ſeparates the fibres of the body. I felt heat and pain before I had learnt by the reflections I made what fire is able to produce on my body: And do not believe that Clowns, who know nothing of what fire doth operate in them, are free from pain when they are burnt. Beſides, I do not know what is the motion that is proper to keep me alive, and help the circulation of the blood. And if I were to feel no heat till I knew it, perhaps I ſhould never feel any. In ſhort, when I happen to burn my ſelf by inadvertency, I feel pain before all things. I might perhaps conclude, by the pain I feel, that there is in my body ſome motion at work which offends it; but 'its evident that the knowledge of thoſe motions neither precede nor cauſe any pain.

Theod. Your Reaſons, *Eraſtus*, are altogether ſound. But what think you of them *Ariſtarchus*?

Ariſt.

Ariſt. They ſeem to me probable enough. However, *Eraſtus*, how can you tell but that your ſoul hath a certain knowledge of inſtinct, which diſcovers to her in a moment all that happens in her body? Anſwer me, *Eraſtus* —— Anſwer me quickly then. 'Tis a ſtrange thing you never anſwer me readily.

Eraſt. I do not underſtand your meaning; but all that I can ſay to you is, that when I know actually ſomething, I am ſure that I do know it, for I am not diſtinguiſh'd from my ſelf. If my ſoul had actually ſome knowledge of inſtinct, or whatſoever other you pleaſe (for I don't underſtand that word very well) I ſhould know it. Yet now that I come near the fire, I do not know that I have the knowledge of the motions that are actually produced in my hand, tho I feel in it ſometimes a pain, and ſometimes a kind of pleaſure or titillation. There is not then actually in my ſoul a knowledge of inſtinct, nor any other. I cannot tell if you are ſatisfied.

Ariſt. But little truly.

Theod. Shall I tell you why you are not well ſatisfied. 'Tis becauſe *Eraſtus* hath made a clear and evident anſwer to an Objection that was not ſo. If you clearly underſtood what you object, *Eraſtus* would anſwer you both clearly and quickly. If hereafter you deſire to receive from him more ſatisfaction than you have had hitherto, conſider well what you intend to ask him. He cannot anſwer you ſpeedily and clearly when he doth not underſtand you, and you do not even underſtand your ſelf. He uſes all his endeavours, not to anſwer but when he hath conſulted inward truth, and had its anſwer, but it never anſwers him when he doth not know what he asks. Yet you would have him give you an anſwer, and that

ſpeedy

ſpeedy too. If he made you any he would deceive you; for it would be his anſwer, and not Truths you ſhould receive.

I will ſtill put ſome queſtions to him, that you may obſerve the method I think is proper to go about it, and that his anſwers may inſtruct you of the Truth we ſeek.

I have obliged my ſelf, *Eraſtus*, to prove the exiſtence of God by the effects which fire ſeems to produce in us; but to do it, 'tis of the greateſt conſequence to know that 'tis not the ſoul that cauſes in her ſelf her own ſenſations. See if you have not ſtill ſome other proof, I do not ſay more ſolid, but more able to convince *Ariſtarchus*. Think on it — Why do you ſometimes ſuffer a pain? Do you delight in it?

Eraſt. I underſtand you, *Theodorus*, I am not to my ſelf the cauſe of my happineſs nor of my misery. If I was the cauſe of the pleaſure I feel, ſeeing I love it, I ſhould always produce ſome in me. And on the contrary, if I was the cauſe of the pain I ſuffer, ſeeing I hate it, I would never produce it in my ſelf. I perceive that there is a ſuperiour cauſe that acts on me, and may make me happy or unhappy: Since I cannot act on my ſelf, and that bodies produce not in me the ſenſations which I feel, as we ſaid juſt now.

Ariſt. You have it not right, *Eraſtus*, you love your Body; you either know or feel that there happens ſome good or ill to it; you either rejoyce or are afflicted at it: The one is your pleaſure, and the other your pain.

Eraſt. What ever *Ariſtarchus* ſays to me, puzzles me, and throws me into darkneſs. I beg of you, *Theodorus*, to diſperſe it.

Theod.

Theod. I do not wonder at it, *Eraſtus*. Whatever he tells you is falſe or full of obſcurity, yet ſeems probable enough.

Will you never retire within your ſelf, *Ariſtarchus*? How can you conceive, I pray you, that *Eraſtus* loves his body? Whatever is within *Eraſtus* that is able to love, is better than the body of *Eraſtus*; *Eraſtus* knows it. His Body cannot act on his Soul, he knows it; his Body cannot be his Good, he knows that too: it cannot be properly ſaid then that he loves it. But here lies the riddle, *Eraſtus* loves pleaſure more than his body; and he reſents pleaſure when his body is well diſpos'd: 'Tis that obliges him to mind his body, and to defend it when any thing offends it. Do you think the Drunkards love their body, when they gorge it with Wine? Do you think the Libertines love their body, when they ruine their health? Is it not rather becauſe they love the preſent pleaſure? Do thoſe who mortifie their body, love it when they tear it, or do you believe they hate it? What is it then they love, but the pleaſures they hope one day to enjoy? What do they hate on the contrary, but the everlaſting torments they fear to ſuffer?

Thus you may ſee, that *Eraſtus* doth not cauſe in himſelf his pleaſure, becauſe he finds, or is ſenſible that the body he loves, is well diſpos'd. For he doth not even know that his body is in a good ſtate, by any other thing than by the pleaſure he hath by it. It is true, that when we feel by pleaſure or by pain that our body is well or ill diſpos'd, we are affected with joy or grief; but if you think on it ſeriouſly, you will eaſily perceive that this grief and joy that are the effects of our knowledge, differ mightily from thoſe antecedent pains and pleaſures of which we ſpeak.

Therefore they muſt have ſome other cauſe than our ſelves. Do you grant it?

Ariſt. I am now convinced of it.

Theod. Now this cauſe muſt be ſuperior and always preſent to us, ſince it acts within us. This cauſe can puniſh or reward us, make us happy or unhappy; ſince pleaſure delights us, and pain diſpleaſes and makes us uneaſie. If then this Cauſe were God, we ſhould know that God doth not only rule the motions of the heavens: But that he hath a hand in our concerns; rules whatſoever paſſes in us; and that in order to our happineſs, we ought to fear him, love him, and follow his orders. For ſince he makes continual applications to us, he requires ſomething from us; and if we do not perform what he requires from us, 'tis not likely that he ſhould reward us, and make us happy.

Ariſt. I own it. But how would you prove that it is not ſome Angel or Demon that hath the Government of us, and acts on us? How would you prove that there is a Being infinitely powerful, and who includes in his being all the perfections imaginable? This ſeems to me very difficult.

Theod. It is difficult, by the method I have taken; but when we acknowledge a ſuperior power that acts in us, we have not much difficulty to conſider him as Soveraign, and to allow him all the perfections of which we have ſome idea. Nevertheleſs I muſt endeavour to convince you fully. Mind me alſo *Enaſtus.*

As ſoon as we are prick'd with a Thorn we feel pain. This pain doth not proceed from the Thorn nor from the Soul; you grant all this: it proceeds then from a ſuperior power. This power ought to know the moment when the Thorn pricks our body, that

that he may in the ſame moment produce the pain in our ſoul. But how ſhall he know it? Think on it— He cannot know it from us; for we know nothing of it yet. Nor from the Thorn; for the Thorn cannot act on the ſpirit of that power, nor repreſent it ſelf to him; for the Thorn is neither viſible nor intelligible by it ſelf, there being no relation between bodies and intelligent beings. Whence then ſhall this ſuperior power learn the moment when the Thorn pricks us? If you tell me that he ſhall know it from ſome other intelligent being, I will ask you the ſame queſtions of the ſecond intelligent being, and if you fly to a third, you will get no more by it. Yet in the very inſtant when we are pricked we feel pain. The ſuperior cauſe muſt then have learnt that the Thorn pricks us without the help of other intelligent beings *ad infinitum*. For as you ſee he would not have ſo ſoon an anſwer, ſeeing 'tis no eaſie matter to find an ultimate in an infinite. There muſt be then an intelligent being that learns in himſelf and by its ſelf in what moment the thorn pricks us: And this intelligent being can be no other than God, that is to ſay, a being whoſe power is infinite, and whoſe will alone is the cauſe of things. For after all, there is none but him whoſe will is efficacious, that can ſee in himſelf and by himſelf the exiſtence and the motion of Bodies. For it being impoſſible he ſhould be ignorant of his own will, he only can diſcover within himſelf the number, figure and ſcituation of bodies, and generally whatever happens to them. It follows then that all other intelligent beings are enlightned by the Creator. And as you ſee, or as you will clearly ſee if you think on it ſeriouſly; you ſhould not know that you have a body, and that there are others about you, if you had not learnt it

of him who knows it by himself. Do you understand these things, *Eraſtus*?

Eraſt. I do plainly, *Theodorus*. This is your argument. What causes pain is neither the Soul that feels, nor the Thorn that pricks; but a ſuperior power. This power ought at leaſt to know the moment when the thorn pricks; he cannot know it from the thorn, ſeeing bodies cannot give any light to ſpirits, they being neither viſible nor intelligible by themſelves, and no relation being to be found between a body and a ſpirit. He can know it then but by himſelf, that is to ſay, by the knowledge of his own will, which creates and moves the thorn, and whoſe power is infinite, ſince it is able to create. There is then a God; and if there was no God, I ſhould not be pricked, I ſhould feel nothing, ſee nothing, and know nothing.

Theod. Very well. But what think you of theſe reaſons, *Ariſtarchus*?

Ariſt. Think, I think that both you, and your echo *Eraſtus*, talk in the clouds: The ground of your proof, is that that there is no relation between bodies and ſpirits. From whence you conclude, that an Angel cannot ſee a body immediately, and by himſelf. To which I anſwer, that that ſpirits may know bodies, it is ſufficient that they penetrate them.

Theod. What do you mean, by *penetrating* them? Certainly *Eraſtus* doth not underſtand you. But without asking you explications, that perhaps would puzzle and diſpleaſe you; doth your ſoul penetrate your body, your heart, or your brain the principal part where ſhe reſides?

Ariſt. I believe it doth.

Theod. Pray tell me then how your brain is compoſed, or that principal part wherein your ſoul reſides?

Ariſt.

Ariſt. I do not underſtand Anatomy.

Theod. How! You don't underſtand Anatomy: Muſt you ſearch in Books, or in the head of other men which you do not penetrate, to know how the brain which your ſoul penetrates is compos'd? What ſignifies it then to a ſpirit to penetrate a body?

Ariſt. I muſt confeſs I have nothing to anſwer. Yet methinks if a ſpirit penetrates a body, he ought to know that body. But perhaps there is ſomething that hinders it, which I do not underſtand.

Theod. If it were ſo, *Ariſtarchus*, this ſomething would be the God whom we ſeek. I will loſe no time to prove it to you: For I will not prove the exiſtence of God by imaginary effects. You may think on it at your leiſure. But I rather adviſe you to make a ſerious reflection on the things I have told you now, and then I hope you will viſibly find that there is a God, I mean a Being whoſe Will is Power, and Power Infinite, ſince it is able to create. You will find that this God doth not walk about the Heavens as the Libertines will have it, but that his providence extends it ſelf to all things, and that he acts inceſſantly in us. That it is he that gives us the pleaſing and painful ſentiments we have of ſenſible objects; and that conſequently he may make us happy or miſerable. In ſhort, you will know God in the moſt uſeful manner for morality. You will even confeſs that God hath made nothing but may ſerve to demonſtrate his exiſtence, though 'tis more conducing to morality, to demonſtrate it by ſomething that paſſes within us.

One of the reaſons why you are not eaſily brought to be of my mind, is that you have perhaps never ſeriouſly thought on the things of which we have been

ſpeaking: For I do not perceive that my proofs are remote, or hard to be underſtood; I will be judg'd of it by *Eraſtus*. And I believe we ought to agree on that point, that hereafter you may be prepared on the ſubjects on which we ſhall treat.

Ariſt. It belongs to you, *Theodorus*, to ſet rules for every thing. For you know that my reſolution is to ſeek none but ſuch truths as are eſſential, and may make us wiſer, and more happy. I need ſay no more to you.

Theod. To this effect, *Ariſtarchus*, I will tell you the courſe I intend to keep in our Conferences: Obſerve it well, that you may think on it at leiſure; and prepare your ſelf to make me all the Objections you can.

I believe I have ſufficiently demonſtrated that there is a God who acts inceſſantly in us, and who may make us happy or unhappy by pleaſure and by pain, of which he alone is the true cauſe; and therefore I will bring no other proofs of it, and will content my ſelf with reſolving your difficulties. But I will prove to you that the deſign of God in creating man, hath been that man might know and love him; that God hath preſerved man but to that end: In ſhort, that that deſign is ſo unalterable, that ſinners and the damned themſelves execute it in one ſenſe, and that they ſhall ſooner ceaſe to be, than they ſhall wholly ceaſe to know and to love God.

When I have eſtabliſht as a principle, that ſince God acts always for himſelf, we cannot be happy if we reſiſt his will, nor unhappy if we obey it. I will demonſtrate how God will be known and be loved; how we can reſiſt his orders; and what is yet more ſtrange, how we are capable to offend him.

I will

I will ſhow that our nature is corrupted, that ſin dwells in us, that the ſpirit is a ſlave to the fleſh. In ſhort, I will explain the cauſe and the effects of the corruption of nature; how our diſorders ſtrange us from God and make us his enemies, as alſo our want of a Mediator and Redeemer.

I will explain the qualities our Redeemer and Mediator ought to have to reconcile us to God, and to ſatiſie his juſtice; that Jeſus Chriſt poſſeſſes them all, and none but him. What may cure the blindneſs of the mind, and the malice of our heart: That thoſe remedies are to be found in the precepts of the Goſpel, and the grace of Jeſus Chriſt. In fine I will ſhow that none but a God made man can reſtore, reconcile and ſave us: That nothing but the blood of Chriſt can cleanſe us; that nothing but his grace can ſtrengthen us; that only his precepts can conduct us to that wiſdom and to that felicity you wiſh for; and that all we have to do in this life is to ſtudy the moral of the Goſpel, to hear Jeſus Chriſt, to love Jeſus Chriſt, to follow and to imitate Jeſus Chriſt; who of God is made unto us wiſdom, and righteouſneſs, and ſanctification, and redemption; that according as it is written, *he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord*, 1 Cor. 1. 30, 31.

DIALOGUE II.

Objections and *Answers.*

Ariſtarchus. WE long'd with impatience to ſee you again, *Theodorus*, for we wanted you almoſt as ſoon as we had left you. *Eraſtus* and I could not agree about the things you told us yeſterday; for there come into my mind ſome difficulties which ſeem to me not to be overcome, and ſo we have done nothing but diſputed all the while; but at laſt *Eraſtus* ſaith he doth not underſtand me, and that he hath nothing elſe to anſwer me.

Theod. Nothing but truth can reconcile minds, and if you diſagree, it is becauſe one of you doth not conſult it. I am very much affraid that you have conſulted your imagination more than your reaſon, and that you have lancht into the deepeſt receſs of your memory for ſome juſtificative evidence of your prejudices. Tell me; is it not true, *Ariſtarchus*, that you have but little meditated on the things I told you yeſterday; and that whereas you ſhould have examined them by the light of truth, you have compar'd them with thoſe things of which the peruſal of the Ancients hath left you a tincture? Will you never be brought

brought to, and will you never understand that you have in your self a faithful master ready to give you an answer at all times, if you ask it with decency and submission; that is to say, in the calm of your senses and passions?

You tell me that you wanted me; but pray are you not ashamed to have recourse to a man to be enlightned, and ought you not to know that if I am capable of giving you some instruction, 'tis not by diffusing light into your mind, but making you retire within your self, and turning you towards the light that enlightens me? Why are we sometimes of the same mind, but because we both retire within our selves, and harken to him of whom all mankind receives the like answers? And why have you so much disputed with *Eraſtus*, but because you told him things which the truth he consults did not tell him, nor had ever told you? I beg of you then, *Ariſtarchus*, that we may have no more disputes; but let truth be the supreme Judge amongst us, and use all your endeavours to make me no objections but such as you understand clearly, and may also be understood by *Eraſtus*.

Ariſt. Perhaps all the difficulty in the objections I made *Eraſtus* proceeded from our ignorance of a great many things; and it may be, that not being much used to meditate, I have proposed to him my ancient prejudices as so many new truths, which presented themselves to me by the strength of meditation. But really I have started to him some difficulties which seem to me grounded upon evident Principles, and are received by all men: Here they are.

You have told us that none but God can act in our soul, and that all the bodies which are about us are uncapable

uncapable of causing in us the sentiments we have of them. But pray is not the Sun bright enough to be visible? Do you think I can suffer my self to be imposed upon, by Philosophical Reasons to believe, that 'tis not the Sun that gives me light after all the experiments I have of it? And supposing you could perswade me that Fire doth not cause the heat or pain I feel when 'tis near me: Do you think you may conclude, that the Sun doth not diffuse light, and say in general as you do now, that all the bodies that surround us, are uncapable of producing in us the sentiments we have of them.

Theod. Forbear to consult your senses, *Aristarchus*, if you desire to hear the answers of Truth. It dwells in the deepest recess of Reason. Peruse at your leisure the first Book of *The inquiry after Truth*, if you have a mind to be fully instructed of the errors of our senses with respect to sensible qualities; for I do not intend to make it my business to explain to you all the difficulties of Philosophy which may puzzle you. The only thing that's necessary at present is that you know there is a God, and he alone can cause in you the pleasure and pain you feel by the intervention of Bodies. You believed it yesterday, or I am mistaken: Do you believe it now?

Arist. I doubt of it for this Reason, that if God did cause in me the pleasure I feel in the use of sensible things. It seems he would dispose me to love them and to cleave to them as to my good: For pleasure is the character of good, 'tis an instinct of nature which disposes us to love what produces or seems to produce it. Yet faith teaches me that God will not have me to love bodies. Can God draw me by pleasure to cleave to sensible things, and forbid me at the same tim

time to love them? This is my difficulty, judge of it now.

Theod. It is a ſolid one, and 'tis abſolutely neceſſary to ſolve it; for from its ſolution moſt of the true principles of morality may be deduced. This is my ſyſtem.

* Being made up of ſpirit and body, we have two ſorts of good to ſeek, ſpiritual and corporal. We have likewiſe two ways to know if a thing is good or bad, *viz.* the uſe of the mind alone, and the uſe of the mind jointly with the body. We can know the good of the mind by an evident and clear knowledge of the mind alone; and we can alſo diſcover the good of the body by a confus'd ſentiment. By the mind I know juſtice is to be beloved: and by the taſte I aſſure my ſelf ſuch a fruit is good. The beauty of juſtice cannot fall under our ſenſes, for 'tis unneceſſary to the perfection of the body; and the goodneſs of the fruit doth not fall under our underſtanding, for a fruit cannot be uſeful to the perfection of the mind.

* It is taken out of the fifth Chapter of the firſt Book of the *Inquiry after Truth.* I have taken ſeveral things from that Book, and deſire the Reader to take notice of it once for all.

The good of the body not deſerving the application of the mind which God made but for himſelf; and God not being willing that we ſhould be taken up with it, it is neceſſary that the mind do know it without examination, and by the ſhort and inconteſtable proof of ſentiment. Bread is fit to nouriſh us, and Stones are not: The proof of it is convincing, and taſte alone hath made all mankind agree in that.

If the mind ſaw in bodies but what is in them, without having a ſentiment of what is not in them, their

their use would be very painful and inconvenient to us; for who would take the pains to examine with care the nature of all things that are about us, to cleave to, or leave them? What should tell us when we ought to sit down to dinner, and when rise from it? What should place us at a reasonable distance from the fire? And should we not often doubt whether we burnt or warm'd our selves? In short, would it not happen sometimes that we should be the cause of our own death by Inadvertency, by Grief; or even out of desire of making near discoveries in Anatomies.

Therefore it is most reasonable that God incline us to seek the good of the body, and shun its contrary by the foregoing sensations of Pleasure, and Pain. For after all, if men were oblig'd to examine the Configuration of a Fruit, those of all the parts of their bodies, and the different relations which result from the one to the other, to be able to judge if in the present heat of their blood, and a thousand other dispositions of their body, this Fruit were good to nourish them: 'tis obvious that such things as are altogether unworthy of the application of their minds, would wholly fill its capacity; and that also unprofitably enough, since they would not be able to preserve themselves any considerable time by that only way.

Arist. I must confess, this conduct is very wise, and most worthy its Author: But yet we feel some pleasure in the use of sensible things, why then must we not love them?

Theod. Because they are not lovely, you are a rational creature, and your reason doth not represent to you bodies as your good. If sensible objects did contain in themselves what you feel, when you use them, if they were the true cause of your Pleasure and Grief,

Grief; you might love and fear them; but your reason doth not tell you so, as I yesterday prov'd it to you. You may use them, but not love them; you may eat of a fruit, but not settle your Love upon it: Likewise you ought to avoid Fire or a Sword, but ought not to fear them.

* We must love and fear what is able to cause pleasure and pain, that's a common notion which I do not contradict. But we must take heed not to confound the true efficient cause with the occasional. I say it once more, we must love and fear the efficient cause of pleasure and of pain, and we may seek or avoid their occasional causes, provided we do not do it against the positive orders of that efficient cause, and do not force it in consequence of its natural Laws, to work in us what is against its precepts: And we must not imitate the voluptuous, who make God an instument of their sensuality, and oblige him, in consequence of his first will, to reward them with a sentiment of pleasure in the very moment when they offend him; for that's the greatest Injustice can be committed.

* See the 8th. Chapter of the 6th. Book *of the Inquiry after Truth.*

Believe me, *Aristarchus*, the good of the body cannot be belov'd but by Instinct; but the good of the mind can, and ought to be belov'd by reason: The good of the body can be belov'd but by Instinct, and with a blind Love; because the mind cannot even perceive so clearly, that the good of the body is a real good; for the mind cannot see what is not: It cannot clearly perceive that Bodies are above the Spirit, that they can act in it, punish, or reward it, and render it more happy, and more perfect; but the good of the mind ought to be lov'd by reason; God will be lov'd with

with a Love of choice, with a reasonable Love, a meritorious Love, a Love worthy of him, and worthy of us; we see clearly that God is our good, that he is above us, that he can act in us, that he can reward us, and render us not only more happy, but also more perfect than we are; is it not this sufficient to make a Spirit love God?

And thus we see, that God was not to make man love him, by the instinct of Pleasure when he created him; he was not to make use of this kind of art, nor implore any force against the Liberty of a reasonable creature, to lessen the merit of his Love: For the first man ought to have adhered to God, and could do it without the help of a preingaging pleasure, though now Pleasure is commonly necessary to remedy the blindness which sin has brought upon us, and to withstand the continual attacks of Concupiscence against our Reason.

I'le say it again, *Aristarchus*, that you may remember it. It was necessary that the antecedent pleasure, and not the light of reason, should incline us to the good of the body; since reason cannot even represent to its self the bodies that are about us, as a good. But there was no need that God should make use of preingaging pleasure, as of a kind of art to cause himself to be beloved by the first man; since it was sufficient that he should enlighten his reason, he being the sole and only good of Spirits.

Arist. I grant all these things are very well imagin'd, but there is still in your System a difficulty that puzzles me: For methinks you confound Concupiscence with the institution of Nature, and making God the Author of the pleasure we feel in the use of sensible things, you also make him Author of Concupiscence, since

since it is nothing else but that pleasure, considered as striving against our reason.

Theod. This institution of Nature is thus, *Aristarchus.*

God hath made the Soul and the Body of man, and 'twas his pleasure, for the preservation of his work, that as often as there should be in the body some certain motions, there should result in the Soul some certain sentiments; provided those motions did communicate themselves as far as a certain part of the Brain, which I shall not specifie, but because the will of God is efficacious, there never hapned any motions in that part of the Brain, but there followed some sensations, and because the will of God is unchangeable, this was not changed by the sin of the first man: Yet as before man had sinned, and whilst all things were in perfect good order, it was not just that the body should hinder the Spirit from thinking on what is desired; It follows that man had necessarily such a power over his body that he did, as it were, separate the principal part of his brain from the rest of his body, and did hinder its usual communication with the sensitive Nerves, as often as he desired to apply himself to truth, or to some other thing than the good of the body. And by those means it was in *Adam*'s power first to make use of his taste to discern the things that were useful to the preservation of the body, and then to eat on without taste and pleasure; because the pleasure he felt in the use of sensible things never overruled his desires; it only modestly warn'd of what he was to do for the good of his body: *Adam* therefore could think on what he would; and one may say, that even when he slept his Spirit was awake: For after all it cannot be believed that in the state of Original Righteousness, there

should

ſhould be ſuch a great diſorder in the moſt admirable work of God, that the ſpirit ſhould be as ſlave to the body. This is the inſtitution of Nature: Now you ſhall hear its Corruption.

The firſt man, by degrees ſtranging himſelf from from the preſence of God, by ſuffering the capacity of his Spirit to be fill'd with ſenſible pleaſures, or the ſentiments of his own excellency, or with ſome other Ideas which, by reaſon of the narrowneſs of his Spirit, did blot out the remembrance of his Duty and Dependance; fell at laſt into a diſobedience to Gods command, and then loſt the power he had over his body. For it is not juſt that a Sinner ſhould reign over any thing, and that God ſhould ſuſpend the Laws of the Communication of motions in favour of a wicked and rebellious man. * For the motions of ſenſible Objects communicating themſelves as far as the brain, and alſo leaving there ſome deep Impreſſions, it is neceſſary according to the firſt will of the Author of Nature that there ſhould reſult in the Soul ſome ſentiments and motions which carry her even in ſpight of her ſelf to ſenſible things.

* I do not ſpeak here of the Concupiſcence which conſiſts in the difficulty we find to put our ſelves in the preſence of God, and in the unvoluntary inclination we have to think always upon our ſelves.

Ariſt. All this is very well; but why doth God continue to be willing that the impreſſions of the brain, and the agitations of the animal ſpirits ſhould be followed by ſentiments and ſenſible motions; ſince that hinders us now from loving him, and applying our ſelves to the Truth for which we are made.

Theod. But why, *Ariſtarchus*, will you have the will of God to depend from that of the firſt man? You have

have seen that the institution of Nature is admirably well ordered; and would you have this Institution alter'd, on the account of the mutability of *Adam*'s will? Do you not know that the inconstancy of the will is a mark of a narrow Understanding, and that God is too just to repent. All what God has will'd, he wills it still; and because his will is efficacious he doth it. God had rather for some time be subservient to the injustice of men, and even in one sense to reward them, by the pleasure they feel in their Debaucheries, than to alter the order of things which he hath most wisely establisht. And men are so unworthy of God, after the rebellion of their first Father, that 'tis just in one sense, that God remove them from him continually, and in a manner reward them when they go from him; but it is a transitory reward, a deceitful reward, the price of sin, that fattens the Victim for the Sacrifice, and prepares sinners for the day of the Lord; for that day when the Judge and Saviour of the world will hurry the impious in the fire everlasting to satisfie the divine justice; as he will raise with him the elect to an Eternal Glory, to exalt the Goodness and Mercy of his Father.

Therefore, *Aristarchus*, the Will of God which forms and rules so wisely all things, was not to depend from that of the first man. It was necessary that this will should subsist, and that he whose wisdom has no bounds should re-establish, in a manner worthy of himself, the order of things which Free-will had overthrown. He hath done it, *Aristarchus*, by his second Will, which makes the order of Grace; by the great design of his Son's Incarnation, by that great work of Mercy which surpasses all his other works, and yields him infinitely more honour, than all that Oeconomy of Nature which is admir'd with so much reason; and

represents in so lively a manner the infinite wisdom of its Author.

Erast. Give me leave, *Theodorus*, to offer to you the greatest difficulty I find in all the things you have told us now. God is infinitely wise, he hath foreseen from all Eternity whatever was to fall out in the order of things he was to establish; he hath foreseen the sin of the first man, before he was form'd; why then did he make him? Or why did he make him free, or why did he not bind and fasten him to his duty by preingaging Pleasures? In short, why did he establish an order that was to be overthrown, and a Nature that was to grow corrupt? I grant that he hath repaired the corruption of Nature by the wisest method imaginable, but would it not have been wiser to have made one uncapable of Corruption? I beg of you to tell me if these things may not justly make us doubt, whither an infinite intelligent being rules all.

Theod. But supposing I did not give you an answer *Erastus*, what could you directly infer from my silence, but that I do not know the designs of God? I have evidently demonstrated to you, by arguing only upon clear Ideas, that there is a God, and that none but him acts really in us. Believe what you have seen, and do not wilfully blind your self by opposing to the light of truth, some objections which can rise but from the darkness of our minds: When we see evidently a thing we must not cease to believe it, as soon as some difficulty we cannot solve is offer'd to us.

Nevertheless, *Erastus*, though I do not flatter my self to know God's designs, I le endeavour to satisfie you in few words, for I will not engage my self to say to you, whatever may be thought upon that subject.

God

God made man becauſe it was his will, and it was his will becauſe man is better than nothing, and that he is more capable of honouring him than nothing.

God made man free, becauſe the will of man is made to love good; but man being able to love but what he ſees, if God had not made him free, or if God did infallibly and neceſſarily carry him towards all that hath the appearance of a good, or towards all that man being apt to err, may conſider as a good; it might be ſaid that God is the cauſe of ſin, and of the diſorderly motions of the will.

God made man free, and left him to himſelf without determining him by preingaging pleaſure, becauſe God will be loved by reaſon, ſince we are rational Creatures: He will be lov'd with an Underſtanding Love, with a Love worthy of him, and worthy of us; a meritorious Love, and which he may remunerate, for other reaſons which I have already told you. He foreſaw that man would ceaſe to love him, I grant it, but he draws his glory from thence. The ſhame of Free-will adds to Gods honour every way, and man being not able to truſt to his own ſtrength, finds himſelf obliig'd by Juſtice, to give to God all the Glory of his actions.

But how do you know after all, but that the firſt and the chief deſign of God in the Creation of man, was the Incarnation of his Son; it may be, *Eraſtus*, that the order of Nature is only the occaſional cauſe of that of Grace, and that God would not have made man, if the fall of man had not given lew to his reparation. I grant that if man had not ſinn'd the Word had not been made fleſh: But is it not certain that the Obedience and Sacrifice of the incarnate Word, hath pleaſed him more who orders all things according to his own plea-

ſure, than the rebellion of man hath diſpleas'd him? Is it not reaſonable to believe that God hath done all for his Son, ſince he hath made all by his Son, and that his chief intent in the diſpoſition of his work, hath been to eſtabliſh his Son Chief of his Church, and Soveraign Lord over all his creatures. *O certè neceſſarium Adæ peccatum——O felix culpa quæ talem ac tantum meruit habere Redemptorem.*

Take notice of this, *Eraſtus*, God acts for his glory; and the chief of his deſigns is that by which he gets moſt of it: But doth he not receive more glory from his Son than from all the reſt of his works? He hath in his Son an Adorer, a Sacrificator, and a Victim of an infinite dignity, for his Son is a God that worſhips him, a God that obey's him, a God that dyes to honour his Holineſs and Juſtice. But ſuppoſing even no bounds to the world, what honour would accrue by it to its Author? Suppoſing all creatures were inceſſantly imployed to praiſe him who gave them being; what proportion is there between the creature and the Creator, between the praiſes of the bleſſed Spirits and the infinite greatneſs of God; except it be that the praiſes of the Saints receive a kind of an infinite greatneſs and dignity in Jeſus Chriſt, through whom, as the Church ſings, Angels praiſe the Divine Majeſty, Powers adore him, *&c.* For the Church knows very well that 'tis only through Jeſus Chriſt we can render to God an honour worthy of him.

I will explain to you thoſe things more at large at ſome other time. What I have ſaid now is ſufficient, to let you judge that though God did foreſee the fall of man, he was not to change his deſign; ſince that fall hath been the occaſion of that great work ſo worthy the greatneſs, and mercy of God, and ſo admirable all manner of ways. Yet

Yet though what I have told you were not certain, you ought not to believe easily that God ought to have alter'd his design because he foresaw the sin of the first man, and the disorder of Nature. Can you think, *Erastus*, that if god only design'd to make a man he would make a Monster? I mean that he would make him with two heads, one of which would be useless, and only troublesome to him, or make him with an useless Arm sprouting out of his forehead, and dangling continually over his face? Can you imagin that such a Creature would be a work worthy of an Intelligence infinitely wise and powerful? Yet there are Monsters, and I do not believe that those small disorders of Nature ought to lessen the esteem you have of its Author; not only because those Monsters, however imperfect in themselves, do not make the world imperfect: But chiefly because those monsters are the consequences of the communication which is between the imagination of the Mother, and the fruit she bears in her Womb, and that this communication is very wisely establisht for the formation or increasing of the Child.

God did well foresee that this communication would sometimes cause some disorder, but seeing it would be of an infinitely greater use towards the accomplishment of his work, than this small disorder, he ought not to have alter'd his design. 'Tis true that God could have remedied it, by establishing for these particular cases some new Laws of motion: But God doth not multiply his will thus, it is a point of his greatness and his wisdom to act always by the most simple ways, and to make use of a very small number of Natural Laws to produce a very great number of admirable works.

Neither

Neither do I believe, that we ought always to imagin that God hath other ways to produce his work, as ſimple and perfect as thoſe of whom he hath made uſe, whereby he could make it more perfect than it is, and ſuch as we would have it to be; for this perhaps may not be. 'Tis likely that God acts in the manner the moſt worthy of him that may be, I mean that his work is as perfect as it can be by relation to the methods which he uſes to produce it: and if we imagin that we diſcover ſome faults in it, beſides our natural diſpoſition to be frequently miſtaken, it may proceed from the ſimplicity of the means of which he hath made uſe to form this work, and from the union which all bodies have with one another. Could you imagin *Eraſtus* that God, though all wiſe and all mighty, cannot fill intirely with ſmall round balls the leaſt ſpace that we can determine? Yet if you think on it ſeriouſly you will eaſily find that this cannot be done; and that the balls touching one another, and leaving a triangular ſpace, there muſt be ſomething beſides balls to fill it. But from whence proceeds this impoſſibility? 'tis not from any want of wiſdom, nor power in the cauſe; but from the relation which bodies have with one another. There is ſuch a Concatenation in all the parts which make up the world, that we have ſome reaſon to believe that perhaps it impylteh contradiction that man ſhould be more perfect than he is, by relation to the bodies that ſurround him, and that perhaps it is not poſſible for him to have wings, and be at the ſame time as well compoſed as he is by relation to the wants of this preſent Life.

And thus, *Eraſtus*, as you muſt not think that God ought to have abandon'd his deſign of forming men by the uſual way of generation, becauſe men ſeem to be imperfect,

imperfect, and monſters are ſometimes generated that way: So you ought not to imagin that God foreſeeing the ſin of man, ought to have taken another deſign; tho he had not even repair'd the diſorder of nature, by a way as worthy of his wiſdom as is the incarnation of his Son.

Eraſt. I confeſs, *Theodorus*, that what you ſay is very reaſonable, and that thoſe want both ſtrength and firmneſs of judgment who abandon evident truths, when ſome difficulties which they cannot ſolve are offer'd to them, tho' thoſe difficulties have no other ground than the ignorance and weakneſs of humane mind. And this perſuades me that moſt of thoſe whom the world call men of great ſenſe, ſuch as are ſome that were here ſome days ago, have not ſo much ſtrength of underſtanding as *Ariſtarchus* imagins.

Theod. You are not miſtaken, *Eraſtus*; thoſe men of mighty ſenſe are commonly diminutive Wits, who have more pride than knowledge; their underſtanding being but ſmall, they neither imbrace nor retain eaſily the proofs of even the moſt common truths, and yet their pride makes them decide ſome queſtions which 'tis abſolutely impoſſible to ſolve. Take heed that you never be frighted as they are by the little difficulties which they raiſe to themſelves againſt the exiſtence of God and the immortality of the Soul, and that you never ſuffer your ſelf to be ſtunn'd by the outward method of their raſh deciſions. Hearken to Reaſon, and follow its light, but never yield to the ſenſible attempt which the imagination of others makes upon your mind. Do you underſtand me well *Eraſtus?*

Eraſt. Very well: You would not have me think, or live by opinion, but think and live by reaſon; and

ſhun carefully the contagion of minds, which communicates it ſelf by the ways and manners of thoſe who ſpeak to us. I endeavour it as much as I can, and am not afraid that any of our pretended men of mighty ſenſe, will ſhake me by whatever they can ſay againſt the proofs of the exiſtence of God, which you have explain'd to us.

Theod. And you, *Ariſtarchus*, are you fully convinc'd that there is a cauſe ſuperiour to you, infinitely wiſe and powerful? have you any more reaſonable doubts to propoſe to me? I am ſenſible that you are not yet freed from the Pannick fear, which your Heroes have inſpir'd in you, and that you are always mov'd by ſome Ideas, and confus'd ſentiments that will diſturb your imagination a long time, to juſtifie the reaſonings of your pretended men of ſenſe: But is your reaſon enlighten'd? Is the light that ſpreads it ſelf in it, according as you give attention to my words, a pure light that perſuades by evidence? Hath it not ſome dazzling and glittering luſtre which convinces you by impreſſion? For as I am thoroughly perſuaded of what I tell you, I am affraid leſt the air and manner of my ſpeaking to you, do ſome violence on your mind, and inſtead of conſulting inward truth, you come out of your ſelf to hearken to me, and ſo you may happen to be perſuaded when I ſpeak to you, and to doubt as ſoon as I ſhall have done ſpeaking.

Ariſt. You have told me ſeveral things that have ſeem'd ſolid to me; but I do not allow them to be ſuch, becauſe I have not thought enough on them, I will do it and ——

Theod. Very well, *Ariſtarchus*, but obſerve that there is no neceſſity that all the things I have told you be inconteſtable, that my demonſtration of the exiſtence

ence of God may subsist. I have too slightly explain'd them to pretend that you may not find some difficulty in them: And I was not to inlarge any more upon them, for only speaking them in answer to your objections, I was not oblig'd to establish their certitude, but only to show their possibility. It may be I will convince you of them hereafter. Nevertheless if you are well persuaded of their possibility, you ought to believe that your objection doth not destroy the proofs I have brought for the existence of a being infinitely wise and powerful, and who acts incessantly in us.

Arist. When I think on all the things you told us yesterday, I cannot doubt of the existence of God. But when I consider that some ingenious men doubt of it, and that Mr.——, and several other learned and very witty persons have assur'd me, they have need of faith to believe it, I still labour under some apprehension lest your proofs be not certain; I will consult Mr.—— to know his mind on it.

Theod. You will consult the God of *Accaron*, instead of consulting the God of *Israel*; are you not satisfied with the clear and visible proofs which inward truth gives you? Why will you again consult this unhappy friend? He hath already darkned your reason, he will do it again, his air is infectious, his imagination prevalent, and imposing, and if you do not take great care——

Arist. I will stand upon my guard, and methinks I shall convert him.

Theod. You convert him, *Aristarchus!* I wish it. But do you think that God speaks to him as he doth to you? Or rather do you think he retires like you within himself to hear him? He hath stopp'd his Ears so long that he is become Deaf. You will speak to his Ears, but you will not speak to his mind. Do you not

not know that he is held by too many things, and that his passions whose motions he blindly follows, have made him slave to whatever is about him? Doth not his Court air, his desire of being esteemed a wit his insolent and slighting way of discoursing about Religious matters, sufficiently show you that he incessantly receives the secret inspirations of the Spirit of Pride? While you will be speaking to him, he will laugh at your simplicity, he will dazzle you by a language of imagination, and you will see your self shamefully thrown at his feet; and truth unworthily us'd by that small society of his admirers who applaud him in whatever he saith.

If you are resolv'd to attempt his Conversion, I advise you to take him by himself, to speak to him without being daunted, to put questions to him continually as having need of his light, and to make him retire within himself by insensible degrees, that he may hearken to truth without being interrupted by his passions. When we design to convince men, we must always see their Self-love, and instruct them by such a method as may make them imagine that they school us. We must take the air of Disciples, and ask them questions with art and an ingenious plainness, that taking a pleasure to instruct us they may retire within themselves to receive the answers that we ask them; but when we have receiv'd from them the answers they have strove to find out for us, we must lay them before them every moment; for having only sought those answers for us, they think no more on them, as soon as they have eas'd themselves of them.

Truth is a very unnecessary lumber to most men; it is only cumbersome to them. But when 'tis of their own finding out, and that by this title it belongs

to

to them, ſelf-love ſuffers it willingly; and they find in it I know not what charm, that wins them in ſpight of the inconveniency they receive by it. So when you ſhall have received a good anſwer to ſome one of the ſeveral queſtions you had ask'd your friend, you may make uſe of it to convince him, he will not diſown it, except you vex him; and it may be that his ſelf-love happily betraying his ſleeping paſſions, he will rejoyce at the ſight of a truth he could not bear a little while before.

Ariſt. I give you thanks for this advice, *Theodorus*, and will certainly make good uſe of it; the Impatience which is excited within me, by the hopes of being ſerviceable to my friend, obliges me to break off our Converſation: I muſt ſatisfie my ſelf.

Theod. I commend your zeal, and the ſincerity of your friendſhip; be of good heart, *Ariſtarchus*; I wiſh you may return ſatisfy'd — and you *Eraſtus* be careful to have in your mind the things that we have ſaid, and to diſcourſe about them with *Ariſtarchus*, as ſoon as he comes back.

DIA-

DIALOGUE III.

Of the Order of Nature in the Creation of Man.

Theod. WEll *Ariſtarchus*, you have converted your man; *Eraſtus* told me juſt now all that paſt between you and him. I even know that he deſires to be your Diſciple, and to have an account of our following conferences. Be pleas'd then for his ſake to apply your ſelf ſo that you may demonſtrate all things to him with ſome exactneſs.

Ariſt. You take the right way to ingage me, for I am extreamly ſenſible to friendſhip; and methinks my deſire to know truth, is doubled by the deſign I have to impart it to my friend. Let us go on then I beſeech you. I am perſwaded that there is a God, that is to ſay, a Being infinitely perfect, whoſe wiſdom and power have no bounds, and whoſe providence extends it ſelf not only to us, but even to the atoms of matter. I remember your proofs, and am convinc'd of them.

Theod. I can demonſtrate nothing of true Religion, nor of true Morality, till I know what God deſigns in the creation and preſervation of our being.

Ariſt.

Ariſt. You muſt ſeek ſome other principle, *Theodorus:* My friend is a Carteſian, his Philoſophy doth not admit final cauſes; and tho he is now convinc'd that there is a God, he will not fail to tell me that we ought not to preſume ſo much of our ſelves, as to believe that God hath been pleas'd to make us privy to his counſels.

Theod. Your friend will never ſay this to you, if he be a good Carteſian. The knowledge of final Cauſes is of little or no uſe in Natural Philoſophy, as *Deſcartes* pretends: But it is abſolutely neceſſary in Religion. Can you obey God, if you do not know his will? and can you hope to pleaſe him, and that he will make you happy, except you be obedient to him? It may be you imagine that we can know nothing of Gods deſign on men, by Reaſon, but you are miſtaken. Do not think too much on your friend. Pray think on what I am going to tell you.

You are perſwaded that God is wiſe, and aſcribe to him all the perfections whereof you have ſome Idea. God therefore, loves moſt what is moſt lovely; and ſo muſt love himſelf more than all things: and be to himſelf the end of all his actions. And by conſequence the end of the Creation, and preſervation of our being. It follows then that the faculty by which we know, that is to ſay, our Mind, and that whereby we love, which is our will, are made and preſerved to know and to love God; ſuppoſing (as you do not doubt it) they have been made to know and to love. Do you find any darkneſs in what I have told you? Pray think on it, 'tis the ground of all we ſhall ſay hereafter.

Ariſt. All this ſeems to me as evident as the moſt certain principles of Natural Philoſophy.

Theod.

Theod. It hath even more certainty: the communication of motion is certain, as experience teaches us; nevertheleſs this communication might not be, and it will in all likelihood ceaſe after the reſurrection, that our bodies may be incorruptible; but it ſhall never ceaſe to be the will of God that we know and love him. Since then this ſeems to be plain to you, how can it happen that there be men that neither know nor love God, ſince God preſerves them but to know and love him? Do you think it poſſible to reſiſt God, and that God hath any love for Spirits who have no knowledge of him nor any love for him? Do you think God preſerves them; and do you not know that if God ſhould ceaſe to love them, they ſhould be no more?

Ariſt. I begin to doubt of your principle, for you draw ſome very ſad conſequences from it.

Theod. 'Tis very ſtrange, *Ariſtarchus*, you ſhould doubt of things of which you have an evidence. Will you always forget that light ought to be preferred to darkneſs, and that clear truths are not to be forſaken, becauſe we find ſome difficulty in clearing ſome dark objections. Learn to diſtinguiſh truth from what ſeems to be ſo; and obſerve that what I objected to you juſt now, is true in one ſenſe and falſe in another. For there is no man but knows and loves God in one ſenſe, as you will ſee it hereafter.

Therefore ſtick firmly to this truth; that God hath made and preſerves ſpirits, but to know and love him: And this truth being granted, ſince it is evident, endeavour to diſcover how it may be conceiv'd that all ſpirits know and love God, for that is of the greateſt conſequence, I will put ſome queſtions to *Eraſtus* that I may inſenſibly lead you to that truth.

Do

Do you think, *Eraſtus*, that Spirits can ſee Bodies? Or rather do you think that this material and ſenſible world can be the immediate object of the mind? Do you think that bodies can act in the mind, make themſelves viſible to the mind, or enlighten it?

Eraſt. I do not think it.

Theod. What then do you ſee immediately when you ſee the material and viſible world?

Eraſt. I ſee, If I may ſay ſo, the Intelligible World.

Theod. How! when you look upon the Stars, do you not ſee the Stars?

Eraſt. When I look upon the Stars I ſee the Stars; when I look upon the Stars of the material world, I ſee the Stars of the intelligible world, and judge that thoſe material Stars are like thoſe of the intelligible world I ſee. For the Sun that I ſee, is ſometimes bigger and ſometimes leſs, and is never bigger than an intelligible Circle of two or three foot diameter; but the material Sun is always the ſame; and according to the ſentiment of ſome Aſtronomers about thirty thouſand times bigger than the Earth: 'tis not then this Sun I ſee, when I am looking upon it.

Theod. But, *Eraſtus*, where is this intelligible world which you ſee? Do you think to include it within your ſelf? Do you think your ſoul comprehends in an intelligible manner all the beings that God can make, and you can ſee? Can your Soul, whoſe bounds are too narrow, whoſe perfections are finite, and who certainly doth not include all things, ſee all things by reflecting on herſelf?

Eraſt. I do not think it; but I dare not tell you my opinion. I imagine that there is none but God that includes the intelligible world, and that we ſee in God whatever we ſee.

Theod.

Theod. But why are you afraid to tell freely what you think of it, *Eraſtus?* Is there any danger or folly in saying that God alone is our light? That he alone is the perfection and nouriſhment of the mind, and that we depend from him all manner of ways, not only that we may become more happy, but also more underſtanding and perfect.

Eraſt. I am afraid that *Ariſtarchus* will say I am full of fantaſtick notions if I say that I see all things in God, as if I affirmed that one may see God even in this life, becauſe whatever is in God is God.

Theod. There is a difference between seeing the eſſence of God, and seeing the eſſence of things in God. For though we see nothing but God when we see the eſſence of things in God, we see God but by relation to Creatures, we see the perfections of God but as they repreſent another thing than God. So that though we see God, and can see nothing but him, ſince he preſerves ſpirits for himſelf only, it may in one ſenſe be ſaid that we see nothing but the Creatures. For tho God sees nothing but himſelf, 'tis certain that he sees the Creatures when he sees what is in himſelf that repreſents them: Thus though we see God but by an immediate and direct ſight we see in God that which repreſents them, for the Creatures are inviſible in themſelves.

There is no corporeal nor ſpiritual Creature can act immediately in the ſoul, and cauſe it ſelf to be ſeen by it. God ſhows us whatever we see, but 'tis in his ſubſtance that he ſhows it us; for the Divine Subſtance alone can give us life, enlighten and make us happy. We are made to be nouriſhed with that ſubſtance and to live by it; and if the ſpirit hath ſome life, I mean if it hath ſome knowledge (for the know-

knowledge of truth is the life of the ſoul, it receives it from, and in that ſubſtance.

Whatever God hath done, *Eraſtus*, he hath done it after his Image, or according to his Image; he hath made the Animals, Plants, and even the Inſects according to the Image, or living *Idea* he hath of them. For he hath made all things by his Son, by his Word, according to the uncreated Wiſdom, in which all things live. But he hath not only made man according to his Image or Wiſdom; but alſo for his Wiſdom, and to contemplate the Eternal Wiſdom that includes the Ideas of all things.

An Impertinent Philoſopher, found this fault in the Religion of Chriſtians, that they Eat him whom they adore, condemning our Communion with the Body and Blood of Jeſus Chriſt, whom we receive after we have Worſhipped him. *He did not know that the Wiſdom of the Father, the Word that enlightens and nouriſhes our Spirit, deſired to teach us in a ſenſible manner, and by the real Manducation of his Body, that he is really our Life and Nouriſhment, and that he hath made our Spirit to know and to love him: For our Spirit ought to love, but what gives it Life, nouriſhes, makes it more perfect, and is above it, ſince only this can be his true good. *Averroïs.* * *Pontificius Loquitur.*

If it is certain that our thinking faculty comes from God, 'tis certain that it is made for God, ſince God Acts only for himſelf, as *Ariſtarchus* owns. But if we do not ſee things in God, how can it be ſaid that God hath only made, and doth only preſerve us for himſelf; for after all, if Bodies are the immediate object of our Knowledge, our Spirit is partly made to ſee them. In what ſenſe can it alſo be ſaid that God

preſerves the ſpirits of Devils and the Damned but for himſelf, if the ſpirit of thoſe wretches doth not ſee God in ſome manner? You will tell me they are Dead; and that is true in ſome ſenſe, but they perhaps know ſome truth, and if the knowledge of truth is the life of the Soul, they are not intirely dead, nor annihilated, they have yet ſome union with the eternal Wiſdom, whoſe light penetrates into the very abyſs. They nouriſh themſelves with the word if they have ſome life left, becauſe he alone is life; but they are not the happier for it, for they wiſh themſelves dead. They nouriſh themſelves with a truth they do not relliſh; they ſeek darkneſs, and annihilation; and wiſh that this remainder of union with God that enlightens and preſerves them, may break and diſſolve it ſelf for ever.

Ariſt. What do you tell us here; *Theodore:* Doth the ſpirit ſee nothing but God? What! Do we ſee Errour in God? Do the Philoſophers ſee all their Chymera's in God? And doth the Father of lies receive from God——

Theod. Errour cannot be ſeen *Ariſtarchus,* 'Tis neither viſible nor intelligible. Truth, is a relation that is; And what is, may be ſeen. There is a relation of equality between two times two and four, and this relation may be ſeen becauſe it is. There is a relation of inequality between two times two and five, and this relation of inequality may be ſeen becauſe it is. So truth is viſible or intelligible; but errour is not. One cannot ſee that two times two is five, or a relation of equality between two times two and five, for there is no ſuch relation of equality. One cannot ſee that two times two is not four, nor a relation of inequality between two times two and four, for there

there is no ſuch relation of inequality. And thus when men miſtake themſelves, they do not ſee the relations which they ſuppoſe they ſee. When a man miſtakes himſelf, he may well ſee things in God, though after an imperfect manner, but he doth not ſee the relations that are between things; for thoſe things are, and thoſe relations are not. I will not here explain the cauſe of our errour, and our different ways of falling into it. It hath been done already.

Eraſt. I own, *Theodorus*, that we ſee in God the eternal truths and immutable laws of Morality. A finite and changeable ſpirit cannot ſee in himſelf the eternity of thoſe truths, nor the immutability of thoſe laws, 'tis in God, he ſees them. But he cannot ſee in God tranſitory truths and corruptible things, ſince there is nothing in God but what is Immutable and Incorruptible.

Theod. Yet, *Eraſtus*, God ſees all the changes that happen in the world, and 'tis in himſelf only he ſees them: It follows then that he ſees in himſelf whatever is ſubject to change or corruption, though there is nothing in him but is perfectly Immutable and Incorruptible. But all this may be explained thus.

God hath in himſelf the Idea (for example) of Extent, ſince he ſees it, and hath made it; and this Idea in Incorruptible. 'Twas his will there ſhould be extended beings, and thoſe beings were produced. 'Twas alſo his will that thoſe extended parts ſhould be inceſſantly moved, and communicate naturally their motions to one another. Now this communication of motions which cannot be unknown to God, it being impoſſible he ſhould not know his will that cauſes it, is the principle of the mutability, corruption, and generation of all different bodies. Thus God ſees

in himſelf the corruption of all things, though he is incorruptible, for whilſt he ſees in his wiſdom the incorruptible Ideas, he ſees in his will all corruptible things; ſince nothing happens but is done by him.

Now I will tell you how we ſee all thoſe things in God. All ideas and immutable truths we ſee in him. As for tranſitory truths, we do not know them in the will of God, as God himſelf doth, for his will is unknown to us: But we know them by the ſentiment God cauſes in us at their preſence. Thus when I ſee the Sun I ſee the Idea of a circle in God, and have in my ſelf the ſentiment of light which denotes to me that this Idea repreſents ſomething that is created, and actually extent: But I have this ſentiment from none but God who certainly can cauſe it in me, ſince he is Almighty, and ſees in the Idea he hath of my Soul, that I am capable of ſentiment.

Thus in all our ſenſible knowledge of corruptible things, there is pure Idea, and ſentiment; the Idea is in God, the Sentiment in us, but God alone is the true Cauſe of both. The Idea repreſents the Eſſence of the thing, and the ſentiment only makes us believe that it exiſts, ſince it diſpoſes us to believe that the thing cauſes it in us, becauſe it is then preſent to our mind, and not the will of God, which alone cauſes that ſentiment in us.

Ariſt. I own that God can enlighten us, and ſhow us in himſelf all the Ideas we have of things. But why ſhould you have your recourſe to this laſt refuge? At leaſt explode the ſentiments of Philoſophers upon that ſubject, that I may the better convince my friend; for without doubt I ſhall find him prepoſſeſſed with ſome opinion or other differing from yours.

Theod.

Theod. It hath been done already by the Author of the Inquiry after Truth. * But if your friend finds fault with me for having a recourse to God and the first cause, to explain some certain things, you may tell him that there are two kinds of natural effects: The Particular, and the General: it is ridiculous to have recourse to the general cause to explain particular effects; but 'tis as much amiss to seek some particular cause to explain the general.

* *Lib.* 3.

For example, if I am asked why Linnen becomes dry when 'tis exposed to fire: I will not answer like a Philosopher, if I say that God will have it so; for 'tis sufficiently known that whatever happens, is by his will. 'Tis not the general cause is demanded, but the particular cause of a particular effect. I ought then to say that the small particles of the fire, or the agitated wood striking against the linnen impart their motion to the particles of water that are in it, and loosen them from the linnen; and I shall have given the particular cause of the particular effect. But if one ask'd me, why the particles of the wood agitate those of the water, or why bodies communicate their motion to those they meet: I should not be a Philosopher, did I seek some particular cause of that general effect; I ought to have recourse to the general cause, that is to the Will of God, and not to some particular faculties or qualities.

Now 'tis acknowledged that the effect is general, and that consequently we must have recourse to the general cause, when the same effect hath no necessary connexion with what seems to be its cause, as it happens in the communication of motion; for the mind sees no necessity why a body, that presses upon another,

ſhould puſh it forwards rather then recoil it ſelf: If then your friend pretends to explain to you the nature and original of Ideas by the ſcientific terms of *innate* or *viſible ſpecies* of *external* or *internal ſenſes*, of *the common apprehenſions* of *the active* or *paſſible intellect*, you may let him know that when a body changes its ſituation or figure, there is no neceſſity that there be a new thought in a ſpirit; And that therefore we muſt go to the general cauſe which alone can reconcile things that have no neceſſary relation with one another. I will loſe no time in ſolving all the difficulties you or your friend may find concerning what I have told you now. You will perhaps find them ſolv'd in the third book *of the Inquiry after Truth.* Let us come to the will of man. I will explain it to you.

God only making and preſerving us for himſelf, inceſſantly moves us towards him, that is to ſay towards good in general, or towards what we conceive to include all good. He even moves us towards particular good without removing us from himſelf; becauſe he includes that good in the infinity of his being: For as ſpirits ſee none but him, in the ſenſe that I have explained, he may incline us towards whatever we ſee, though he hath made us for himſelf alone. But we ought to obſerve that he inclines us invincibly and neceſſarily towards good in general, becauſe as the love of good in general can never be bad, it was not to be free: But as the love of particular good, though good in it ſelf, may be bad, it was to be in our power to conſent to or withſtand its motion.

Ariſt. But how can the love of particular good be bad, *Theodorus?* We only love what we ſee, we ſee nothing but God, therefore we love nothing but God when it ſeems we love the Creatures; how then can our love be bad? *Theod.*

Theod. We love nothing but God, *Ariſtarchus*, for God preſerves us only to love him: But our love is bad when it is not regulated: Or rather our love is always good abſolutely and in it ſelf, but it is not relatively good. Our love is always good in it ſelf, for we can never love what ſeems bad to us: We can love but what we believe to be good and lovely, ſince 'tis God that makes us love, and that we love none but him, becauſe we love nothing but what we ſee in him. But our love is bad relatively, becauſe we love too much thoſe things that are leaſt lovely; in ſhort, becauſe inſtead of loving God in himſelf, we love him with relation to his Works, for loving only what we ſee, we love God, but only as he repreſents a vile creature, and not according to what he is in himſelf.

God allows us to love what is in him that repreſents a creature, for that is good; bu: he will not have us to fix there the motion of our love: He would have us to love whatever he includes. He would be belov'd according to the Idea of Being in general, of Being infinitely perfect, and ſoveraignly lovely; which Idea hath no relation but to himſelf, and repreſents nothing that is out of him. Nothing but the Idea of the infinite good ought to ſtop the motion of our love; and we are ſo free in the love of finite good that we even feel the ſecret reproaches of our reaſon, when we fix our ſelves on it: Becauſe he that made us for himſelf ſpeaks to us, that we may turn to him, and give no bounds to the motion of love which he inceſſantly produces in us. All the motion that the ſoul hath towards good, comes from God, and God only acting for himſelf, all the motion of the ſoul hath no other end nor bound than God in the Inſtitution of Nature. God preſenting to ſpirits no other

Idea but himſelf, ſince he hath made ſpirits for himſelf; All the motion of our wills is towards him, ſince wills move themſelves towards thoſe things only which the ſpirit perceives. But men thinking that they ſee creatures in themſelves, the conſent they give to the motion that God imprints in them, ends in the creatures; and it may be ſaid with a great deal of truth that the free will of men, or their conſent to the motion they receive from God, tends to the creatures, though the natural motion of their love can tend only to God.

By this you ſee *Ariſtarchus*, that God preſerves ſpirits for himſelf only; that the faculties they enjoy, to know and love, know and love none but him; that ſinners do not overturn the laws of nature; that they are inviolable; and that this general principle of Religion and Morality, *viz.* That God hath made us for himſelf, is undeniable.

Ariſt. But if the order of nature is that we know and love God; and if we cannot reſiſt that order, ſince the motion of our love for the creatures tends of neceſſity towards the Creator; how can it be ſaid that we really offend God?

Theod. It may be ſaid for many reaſons.

God inceſſantly moves ſpirits towards good either general or particular; for all good is to be beloved. He invincibly moves them towards general good, but 'tis otherwiſe with the impreſſion he gives them towards particular good. God doth not limit towards that good the act which he produces in them: For if we obſerve it duely, we ſufficiently perceive that in the very time when we fix on ſome finite good, we have ſome motion to go further if we will. So we offend God by ſtopping his act, and not letting him act in us according to the full extent of his act. The

The reaſon why God moves us towards good is becauſe it moves us towards him; and he moves us towards himſelf becauſe he loves himſelf. 'Tis then the love of God to himſelf that produces our love in us, Therefore our love ought to be like to that which God bears to himſelf: But it is not like it when it concenters in a particular good; it is then unworthy of the cauſe that hath produced it, and it may be ſaid to be diſpleaſing to him.

Order is certainly the eſſential and neceſſary Will of God, according to which, and by which he wills whatever he wills, for God loves order, he wills nothing but order, his will always follows order: But a creature who loves more thoſe things that are leſs lovely, thwarts order, withdraws himſelf from it, and even overthrows it as much as he is capable of it. He reſiſts then to the will of God, and ſo deſerves to come into the order of his juſtice, ſince he leaves that of his goodneſs which is the firſt and moſt natural.

God alone can act in the ſoul and cauſe in her ſome pleaſure: And by his decree or general will that makes the order of nature, 'twas his deſire that pleaſure ſhould attend certain motions in the body. So thoſe that produce in their body theſe motions without reaſon & even againſt the ſecret reproaches of their reaſon, oblige God in conſequence of his general will to renumerate them by pleaſing ſentiments, even in the very time when they ought to be puniſhed. They therefore uſe violence againſt his juſtice, and offend him. But they only uſe this violence, by the love they have for particular good: So this love offends God. For all thoſe who love their pleaſure, without minding the true cauſe that produces it, offend

that

that cauſe: ſince God never cauſes pleaſure with an intent that we ſhould fix on it; but rather that we may love the cauſe that produces the pleaſure, and that we may unite with the thing that determines that cauſe to produce it.

You ſee therefore, *Ariſtarchus*, that God is offended when we fix the motion of love he cauſes in us, on particular good. But though you might not ſee it, you cannot doubt but it is ſo; for when we confine our love to ſome particular good, we feel an inward check in the ſecret of our reaſon, and a juſt check is a mark of infidelity againſt him that cauſes it, thoſe checks or reproaches can proceed but from a general cauſe, ſince they are generally to be found in all mankind, and muſt therefore be juſt, ſince they are cauſed by a juſt God; and this juſt God is offended when we confine our love to particular good. This ſingle Argument is ſufficient, for 'tis unneceſſary to ſeek metaphyſical proofs of a thing whereof we are convinced by inward ſentiments, that is, by a light which ſtrikes through the blindeſt, and by a puniſhment that ſtings the moſt hardened ſinners.

Ariſt. I believe all this, and I pray you to go on.

Theod. If you believe all this, *Ariſtarchus*, you may ſee your friend, aſk him at firſt if he deſires to be happy. Show him that none but God can act, and cauſe in him that pleaſure he loves ſo much, and that renders him the more happy the greater it is: Let him know that God is juſt, that he will be obey'd, that it cannot be conceived he ſhould make truely happy thoſe who do not follow his orders, nor unhappy thoſe that follow them; that ſo we ought to uſe all our endeavours to know the Will of God, and ought to obey it with all the fidelity imaginable.

ginable. You are ſenſible that men muſt be either ſtupid or out of their ſenſes, not to ſee thoſe things, and that thoſe that ſee them and are not affected with them muſt either be mad or deſperate; but do not tell him ſo; take heed above all things you do not awaken his paſſions, and principally his pride; for he would conceive nothing of what you might tell him; make him underſtand as much as you can, that God acts only for himſelf; That he hath made our ſpirit only for himſelf; That he hath given ſome motion to our heart, only to incline it towards him; That therefore we ought not to make an ill uſe of the motion of love which God cauſes in us, by loving any thing beſides him, or without relation to him.

Make him underſtand that God is his true good, not only by being alone capable to make him happy, but alſo becauſe none but God can make him more perfect; not only as he is the cauſe of pleaſure, but alſo as he is the original of light.

Endeavour to perſuade him that God alone is the life and nouriſhment of the ſoul; That all bodies are inviſible by themſelves, and altogether uncapable of producing any ſentiment in our ſouls; That all good is included in God in an intelligible manner, in a manner fit to act into the mind, to ſhew it ſelf, and cauſe it ſelf to be felt by it; In ſhort, that God alone is the true good of the mind all manner of ways, and that we ought to love and adore none but him.

Raiſe in him a deſire to hear you, by things on which perhaps he never thought, and ſuch as may by their novelty ſtir up in him a ſalutary curioſity. But above all things, endeavour to make him very ſenſible of his unjuſtice towards God, whilſt he follows his paſſions: And that being a ſinner, and conſequently unworthy

unworthy of being rewarded by the delightful ſentiments of pleaſure, he obliges God in conſequence of his immutable orders to affect him with delight in the very moment he offends him: Death ſhall corrupt his body, and then God remaining unchangeable in his decrees, will avenge during a whole eternity the wrongs he ſhall have done him, by compelling him, in a manner not only to be ſubſervient to his diſorders, but even to reward him for his diſobedience.

In ſhort, make him ſenſible of the neceſſity there is to repent, and ſtrive to inſpire in him a ſalutary horror of all thoſe criminal pleaſures that bewitch the ſenſes, and corrupt the heart and reaſon: That retiring within himſelf, the confuſed noiſe of his paſſions may not hinder him from hearkning to the ſecret checks of inward truth, and thus he may underſtand what you ſhall tell him afterwards.

DIA-

DIALOGUE IV.

Of the Diſorder of Nature cauſed by Original Sin.

Theod. WELL what ſatisfaction have you had of your laſt viſit to your Friend?

Ariſt. None at all. My Friend becomes ill-humoured when ever I ſpeak to him: nay, ſometimes he grows angry, and flies out in a paſſion. This troubles me very much.

Theod. But doth he laugh no more at what you ſay?

Ariſt. No.

Theod. Be of good heart then; your Friend mends, and, I hope, will recover. He begins now to feel his wounds, ſince he laughs no more when they are dreſt.

Should you wonder to ſee a man grow ill-humoured and angry if another filled him with wounds, confuſion and ſhame: why then would you have your Friend inſenſible? You have told him perhaps ſome truths that oblige him to leave his pleaſure, *to ſhake off the Old Man*, to be in a diſpoſition to repent, and appear full of confuſion and ſhame in the ſenſe of his unfortunate

unfortunate Friends, who will laugh at his change. He hath had a proſpect of all thoſe things within himſelf, and they have ſcar'd him. If he be vext, 'tis becauſe you have wounded him; and I believe that you have offended him, by Convincing him. Can any thing grieve and mortifie a worldly man more, than the thoughts of being obliged to change altogether his way of living, and approve by his own example a manner of life which his Friends ridicule, and he himſelf hath laught at with them all his life-time? Perhaps your Friend finds himſelf obliged to this. He is willing to breakhis bonds, but he tears himſelf to pieces: his heartis divided, and you wonder at hi s pain and impatience.

Know, my dear *Ariſtarchus*, that if your Friend heard you without being moved, it would ſhow that he is not affected with your words; that they do not reach his heart; that he is not convinced by that conviction which ſtirs us to action, begins our converſion, and makes us ſuffer, becauſe it ſtrips us of the *Old Man*. So, I would have you be joyful, not becauſe you have filled your Friend with ſadneſs, but becauſe his ſadneſs is in all likelihood the ſadneſs that inclines us to repentance.

Ariſt. You revive me extreamly. Let us go on I pray you in our conferences, that I may ſtrengthen my ſelf in the knowledge of the proofs of Religion and Morality to convince my Friend fully.

You prov'd me t'other day that God hath made us to know and love him. Pray what conſequence do you draw from that principle? For I grant that God will not have us to fix on particular good the motion of Love that he inceſſantly cauſes in us, that we may

love

love him inceſſantly, not with reſpect to his works, which being below us, are unworthy of our Love, but in himſelf, and according to the idea we have of him, as a Being infinitely perfect.

Theod. All the Precepts of Chriſtian Morals depend upon that Principle. You believe it already, but you ſhall ſee it clearly, when I ſhall make uſe of it to juſtifie the counſels which the Eternal Wiſdom hath given us in the Goſpel.

I will ſhow you now that this principle is the ground of the Chriſtian Religion, that owns the need of a Reſtorer, and Law-giver, able to illuminate the Spirit, and give a new ſtrength to the Soul; of a Mediator between God and Men, who may offer a Sacrifice, and eſtabliſh a Worſhip worthy of God, and able to ſatisfie his juſtice.

You own that God will be loved with all our ſtrength, that is to ſay, that all the motion of love he creates in us, end towards him, and that we love creatures only for him, and not him with reſpect to creatures. But do you love him always after that manner? do you find no difficulty in the practice of his Love? do you feel no pain to follow this motion to its utmoſt, or no pleaſure to ſtop it. In ſhort, do you not find often that the ways of vertue are hard and painful, and thoſe of vice ſmooth and pleaſing?

Ariſt. I am not more perfect than St. *Paul.* I ſometimes delight in the love of God according to the inward man, but I feel in my body another law that fights againſt the law of my ſpirit. I ſuffer when I practice vertue: I receive ſome pleaſure in the enjoyment of ſenſible things in ſpight of all my oppoſition; and am ſo much a ſlave to my body, that I cannot

even

even apply my ſelf without pain and reluctancy to things that have no relation to the body.

Theod. But whence proceeds this pain you reſent in doing well, and this pleaſure you have in doing ill? You are not the cauſe of your own pleaſure nor pain, for if you were, ſeeing you love your ſelf, you would never produce pain in your ſelf, and would ſtill be injoying ſome pleaſure. Neither is it your body, nor thoſe that are about you; for all bodys are below you, and it cannot be conceived that they may act in you, or make you happy or unhappy. None but God can act in the Soul. But do you think that God afflicts you when you do well, or that he rewards you when you do ill? Do you think that God who deſireth that you may love him with all your ſtrength, throws you back when you run after him? But when you ceaſe to follow him, and ſtop at ſome particular good, do you think that he fixes you on it by the pleaſure you find in it.

Eraſt. What are you affraid of, *Ariſtarchus*? Is it not plain that God alone can act in us? hath not *Theodorus* demonſtrated it to you? why do you heſitate? will you already leave Principles plainly demonſtrated for an objection you cannot ſolve? will you prefer darkneſs to light? Yes 'tis God—

Theod. Softly, *Eraſtus*, I eſteem the firmneſs of your mind, but I like the diſpoſition wherein I find *Ariſtarchus* better in this caſe: he fears to fail in point of reſpect towards God, and that there may be ſomething hard and violent in the conſequence I would draw.

Eraſt. I have thought on your Syſtem, *Theodore*, and can explain all this without ſaying any thing hard or diſpleaſing. What you juſt now did object to *Ariſtar-*

Ariſtarchus plainly evinces original ſin, the diſorder of nature, the enmity that is between God and man, the neceſſity of a Mediator, Lawgiver and Reſtorer; in ſhort, it ſeems to me that I have a glimpſe of the Chriſtian Religion in that Principle.

Ariſt. You go very faſt, *Eraſtus.* I pray you, *Theodore*, demonſtrate that the proof of original ſin is to be found (as *Eraſtus* pretends) in thoſe things you told me juſt now.

Theod. How, *Ariſtarchus*, do you not ſee it? Do you not remember the ſyſtem which I explained to you two days ago? But 'tis no matter. I ask you; Is it not a diſorder, that a ſpirit who is made for none but God, ſhould ſuffer when he loves God?

Ariſt. But you ſay, that it is God that makes him ſuffer.

Theod. I own it; But is it not a diſorder, that God who hath made ſpirits for none but himſelf, and gives them no motion but towards himſelf ſhould repel them from him, puſh them back, and uſe them ill when they come near him, and cauſe in them ſentiments of pleaſure when they turn from him, and fix on ſome particular good?

Ariſt. This is not only a diſorder, but a contradiction. This cannot be. God doth not contradict, nor oppoſe himſelf.

Theod. But, *Ariſtarchus*, Is it not certain that God makes, and preſerves us for none but himſelf? Is it not alſo moſt certain that God alone acts in the Soul, and gives her ſenſations of pleaſure or pain, when ſhe cleaves to bodies, or when ſhe deprives her ſelf of them. Is it not God that moves us to love him? and alſo to love bodies, if the pleaſure we feel at their appearance may be reckoned a ſufficient reaſon for a reaſonable ſpirit to love them?

Ariſt. It is true. But how?

Theod. I have already explained it to you. But yet can this diſorder, this fight of God againſt himſelf (give me leave to uſe theſe expreſſions for a while) this want of uniformity we imagin to be in Gods Actions, proceed from God? God made man for himſelf, and even preſerves him for himſelf only; but when a man quits the body to unite himſelf to God by the force of meditation, when a man walks in the ways of vertue to come near God he feels pain, and this pain proceeds from none but God? Doth not this ſhow that God is angry with us, and that we have diſpleaſed him? If God will have us to run after him and to follow and ſeek him, is it poſſible he can reject and puſh us back, and make us reſent pain when we really follow him, unleſs at the ſame time there be ſome Enmity between us and him? Why doth he repel us when we follow him, but becauſe we are unworthy to come near him? And how are we unworthy to come near him, ſince he is the end of our Creation, unleſs it be becauſe we are no more ſuch as God had made us, and he doth not care for us as we are now, and we want a Reſtorer and a Mediator.

Ariſt. I doubt you have not well demonſtrated yet the Enmity which you believe to be between God and men. You ſay that God repels us when we would come near him, becauſe he makes us have a ſenſe of pain in the practice of vertue and the inquiry after truth.

But I have two things to object to you; *Firſt* that if it ſeems that God repels and moleſts us by Sentiments of pain, on the other ſide he comforts us in the deepeſt receſs of our reaſon; for we feel an inward joy in the practice of vertue which makes us know ſufficiently

ently that God is our good; and if God did not desire we should love him, he would not reward us with this inward comfort; nor create in us those bitter checks and reproaches that make us uneasie in the injoyment of sensible good.

Secondly, God doth not repel and thrust us from him when we run after him; he only gives us notice by sentiments of pain to seek somewhere else than in him the good of the body. And as meditation is not conducible to our health, we ought to feel some pain in its practice, that we may leave it off; for all sensible pleasures or pains, are only warnings to the body: and you ought not to think that God will have us love or hate any thing for the sake of the pleasures or pains we receive in the use of them; God will have us to seek or avoid them, for the preservation of the Body, as you said two days ago, but he will not have us love or fear them.

Theod. Whatever you have said now is true, *Aristarchus*, but it doth not overthrow what I had establisht before. I own that God comforts us by an inward joy when we love him, and that he torments us by knawing checks when we love the good of the body. After all, what doth this prove? nothing else but that God will have us to love him, and that he hath made us for himself. It is a certain mark that the enmity between God and men is not full and general; but it is not a sure sign of a perfect friendship.

Sinners have offended God, there is enmity between them and God, you do not doubt it; and yet God recalls them to him by checks and reproaches: Yet this doth not shew that he loves them perfectly, but only that the enmity is not entire and absolute, for it cannot be such, without causing their destruction. And do not imagine that these checks,

alone, such as the Heathens felt them, could make them come back, reconcile and rejoin themselves to their principle. This call was only to justifie God's conduct, and condemn that of Sinners. For in all likelihood it is to be found even amongst the Damned, who will be eternally recalled, and eternally repelled and condemned; those checks being a condemnation of their malice. None return but such as are called back in Jesus Christ; for nothing but his grace can make this Call efficacious: without the grace of Christ, sensible attractions have a greater power than this inward call. God pushes us back more than he draws us to him, and if he will have us because he made us, he will not have us such as we have made our selves; far from this, as such he cannot suffer us near him, and always removes us from him.

Yet, *Aristarchus*, it is true that God is too just, and loves himself too much not to desire to be beloved, and to remove positively from him creatures whom he only made for himself; for sensible pleasure or pain removes from God but indirectly and by our own fault: First, because being able to find out by reason that bodies are incapable of creating in us either pleasure or pain, we ought neither to fear nor love them, but God alone who hath power to cause these sensations in us.

When something wounds us we ought to fear God; and when our senses are any ways pleased, we ought to think on him, and fear and love him in all things: For it is a common notion, that the true cause of pleasure and of pain ought to be loved and feared. But our ignorance of the actual presence and continual operation of this true cause of our sensations makes us love and fear bodies, imagining them to be capable to act in us. Now

Now this ignorance is not ſomething poſitive, cauſed in us by God: it is nothing. It is true that not to love or fear bodys, it is abſolutely neceſſary we ſhould have a very clear and lively knowledge of the preſence and continual operation of God upon us; for the knowledge which Philoſophy gives us of him doth not ſtrongly enough diſpoſe us to cleave inceſſantly to him.

But what can be concluded from God's not cauſing himſelf to be known enough without his grace, to be Loved and feared in all things, but that men have offended and diſpleaſed him.

God doth not therefore remove us poſitively from him, when he cauſes ſome pleaſure or pain in us by the means of bodys, ſince we ought and may then think on him rather than on thoſe bodys. Now I come to the ſecond reaſon.

Seeing we have a body, it is neceſſary we ſhould have notice of what paſſes in it. It is neceſſary that at the appearance of objects we have ſentiments moving us to cleave to, or ſhun them. It is alſo neceſſary that theſe ſentiments be preingaging for ſome reaſons that I have mentioned elſewhere.

So God doth not poſitively remove us from him, when he cauſes in us our ſentiments, ſince on the contrary it is the ſhorteſt means to warn us of the things that are neceſſary for the preſervation of life without turning us away from him.

But thoſe preingaging Sentiments ought not to diſturb us, nor oppoſe our Reaſon; and ſeeing they do, it is evident, as I have already ſaid it, That Man doth not deſerve God ſhould interrupt the Law of the communication 2d. *Dial.*

of motions for his ſake: but this doth not imply, that God really puſhes us back from him.

In ſhort, men ſee all things in God; their immediate object is the intelligible world, and the very ſubſtance of God; but they not thinking on him at the appearance of ſenſible objects, imagine that ſome outward being altogether like the Idea they have of it, acts in them: Thus God moves them only towards himſelf, ſince he only moves them towards what they ſee, and not towards thoſe things which they imagine to be external, and it is only indirectly and through a miſtake that they love the creatures which are neither ſo lovely, nor ſuch as they imagin them to be.

Eraſt. You are much in the right *Theodorus*, when you believe that the firſt cauſe of our diſorders, is our not having God always preſent to our minds; and not ſeeing or rather not feeling him in all things. For did we plainly and ſenſibly ſee, that none but God really acts in us when bodies are preſent to our ſences; methinks we would fear and love none but him, ſince we love or fear nothing but what acts in us.

How then could *Adam* eſtrange himſelf from God? for he could ſee God in all things, and had all the knowledge, that was neceſſary to remain united to him. If you do not explain how he could fall into ſin; perhaps *Ariſtarchus* will believe that the firſt man was made ſuch as we are, and that concupiſcence is not ſo much a puniſhment for ſin, as the firſt inſtitution of Nature.

Theod. You need not fear it, *Eraſtus*, he knows now that we ought not to leave a demonſtrated Truth, becauſe we cannot ſolve ſome difficult Points; he now ſticks to what he ſees. But I underſtand what you mean, and anſwer you thus.

The

The first man did clearly see God in all things; he evidently knew that bodies could not be his true good, nor properly make him in the least happy or unhappy, he was fully convinc'd of God's continual operation on him; but *his* was no sensible conviction, he knew this but did not feel it: on the contrary he could feel that bodies acted on him, tho he could not know that they did it. It is true that being endowed with reason, he ought to have followed his light and not his sentiment; and that he could easily have done it, seeing he could stop his sentiments when he pleased, being free from concupiscence. However deferring too much to his sences, and suffering himself by degrees to hearken to them more willingly than to God himself, by reason that the sences always move pleasingly, and God did not move him to hear him by preingaging pleasures, which must have lessened his Freedom; you easily conceive how he came to remove himself so far from God, as to lose sight of him, to adjoyn in will to a creature by whose means he received some satisfaction: and which he might then confusedly imagin to be capable of making him as happy, as the Serpent assured *Eve*, it would. For tho *Adam* was not attackt, nor seduced by the Serpent, as *Eve* was. *And Adam was not deceived*, 1 Tim. 2. 14. Yet what God said after *Adam*'s fall, *Behold the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil*, Gen. 3. 22. Sufficiently shows that he had some hopes of becoming happy by the means of the forbidden Fruit. Now to determine us to do a thing, there is no absolute necessity that we be fully persuaded that our Motive is just and reasonable. The hopes of a great benefit, tho never so small, are capable of making us do much. So we may suppose that *Adam* was so strongly applied to

ſenſible Objects, and, conſequently, ſo far removed out of God's preſence, that the leaſt hope, the ſlighteſt doubt, and the moſt confuſed ſentiment of ſo great an advantage as that of being like God, hath been capable of moving him to do a thing, which he did not, perhaps, think very ſinful at the time of his Fall.

All finite Spirits muſt be ſubject to Error and Sin, principally if they reſent preingaging pleaſures, which incline them to ſeek things that they ought not to love, and to ſhun what they ought not to fear. For no finite Spirit can actually reſent pleaſure, without actually dividing the capacity he hath to think, and leſsning the knowledge of his duty, without being removed by it out of God's preſence, in ſhort, without weakning by little and little his love and his fear, inſomuch that actual pleaſure ſeems a Reaſon, or ſufficient Motive to love what is not worthy of our love.

Adam ought to have remained fixt and unmoveable in the preſence of God, and not have ſuffered the capacity of his ſpirit to be divided by all thoſe pleaſures that were in perfect ſubjection to his Will, and uſed only to warn him of what he was to do for the preſervation of his life; and as he ſhould, ſo he could have done it. And had he made a good uſe of his Free-will, during the time preſcrib'd for a Reward, he ſhould have been confirm'd in his Righteouſneſs, not only by a more clear knowledge of God's continual operation on him, but by a ſenſible knowledge which invincibly fixes on God, all Spirits naturally deſiring to be happy. For the Saints do not only ſee by a Far-fetch'd, and Metaphyſical Sight, that God alone is capable of acting in them, and making them happy: But they alſo feel it by an un-

nſpeakable comfort which God diffuſes in them, which enetrates them, and unites them with him ſo ſtrongly, hat they cannot forſake him to love any thing elſe.

I ſpeak of thoſe things according to the preſent nowledge of human underſtanding; and do not pre-end always to certifie the truth or exiſtence of things, when I anſwer to what may be objected to me; my tmoſt Deſign is to prove their Poſſibility.

Ariſt. This is ſufficient *Theodore*; But how would ou explain the Tranſmiſſion of Original Sin, and the eneral Diſorder of human Nature? For it is our Soul hat hath ſinn'd, and is corrupt. How comes it to e poſſible, that coming from the hands of God, they row corrupt as ſoon as they are united to Bodies?

Theod. Our Soul is made to love *God*. She keeps n the Order of her Creation when ſhe loves him; that s to ſay, when the motion which *God* gives her, carries er towards him in the Senſe that I explain'd it to you eſterday. On the contrary, ſhe ſtrays from the Or-er, when having a motion ſufficient to reach to *God*, he ſtops at ſome particular good, and thus hinders *God*'s Act in her. I do not believe it can be conceiv'd, that he can be orderly or diſorderly another way. If then demonſtrate, that by reaſon of the Union which Children have with their Mother, the Soul of Chil-ren is by neceſſity turn'd towards Bodies, that their oul loves only Bodies, and all her motion confines it elf to ſome ſenſible thing from the moment ſhe is orm'd; I ſhall have demonſtrated the cauſe of the ge-neral diſorder of Nature, and how we are all born in in.

I prove it thus. There is no Woman but hath in er Brain ſome Impreſſion that repreſents to her ſen-ible things, either becauſe ſhe actually ſees Bodies, or receives

receives her nouriſhment from them. You do not doubt of this; for, after all, we muſt at leaſt eat to live; and we cannot eat, but our Brain receives ſome Impreſſion of it, ſince we remember it. There happens alſo no Impreſſion in the Brain, without being follow'd by ſome Emotion in the Spirits, which doth incline the Soul to the love of the thing that is preſent to the mind at the time of that Impreſſion; that is to ſay, to the love of this or that Body: for Bodies only can act on the Brain. In ſhort, there is no Woman but hath in her Brain ſome ſteps and *veſtiges* or ſome motion of Spirits which makes her think, and carries her to ſenſible things. Now when the Child is in his Mother's Womb, he feels the ſame Impreſſion and Emotion of Spirits with his Mother; therefore in that ſtate he knows and loves Bodies. The daily Inſtances we have of Children that fear or abhor thoſe things that frighted their Mother whilſt they were with Child, ſufficiently ſhews, that they have had the ſame Impreſſion, and conſequently the ſame *Idea's* and Paſſions as their Mothers; ſince they ſometimes never ſaw ſince they were born thoſe things which they ſo much abhor. And thoſe Inſtances even ſhew us, that the Impreſſions and Agitations are greater, and conſequently the *Idea's* and Paſſions more lively in Children, than in their Mothers, ſince they remain affected with them, and oftentimes their Mothers no more remember it.

See the 7th *Chapter* of the 2d *Book* of the *Inquiry after Truth.*

I perceive, *Eraſtus*, that you wonder to hear me ſay that Children ſee, imagin, and deſire the ſame things with their Mothers.

Eraſt. I muſt own, that this amazes me, but it ſeems to me demonſtrated, however there being holy

Women,

Women, and full of the love of *God*, how come their Children to be Sinners?

Theod. It is becauſe the love of *God* doth not communicate itſelf like the love of *Bodies*; the reaſon whereof is, that *God* is not ſenſible; and that there are no ſteps in the Brain, that by the inſtitution of Nature do repreſent *God*, nor any of thoſe things that are purely intelligible.

A Woman may well repreſent to herſelf *God* in the Form of a Reverend old Man: but whilſt ſhe thinks on *God*, her Child ſhall think on an old Man; when ſhe loves *God*, her Child will love old Men; and this love of old Men doth not a juſtify. All the *Veſtiges* in the Brains of Mothers communicate themſelves to Children: But the *Idea's* that are join'd to thoſe *Veſtiges*, by the Will of Man, or by the *Identity* of Time, and not by Nature, do not communicate themſelves to them; for Children in the Womb are not as knowing and holy as their Mothers.

Eraſt. But, *Theodore*, Children are not free: I own, they love Bodies; but they cannot hinder themſelves from loving them. How then are they Sinners? How are they corrupt?

Theod. Their Sin is not of their own chuſing, nor free and voluntary; yet they are corrupt. For all Spirits that are averſe from *God*, and inclin'd towards corporeal Beings, do not follow *God*'s Orders, if it be true that *God* will be loved more than Bodies.

Concupiſcence is not a Sin in virtuous perſons, becauſe there is in them a love of choice that oppoſes it. Concupiſcence doth not reign in them, but it reigns in Children; their natural love is bad, and they have no other.

When two ſorts of loves are to be found in a heart,

heart, God regards only that love which is free; ſo Dreams are not ſinful in pious Men, becauſe the love of choice that went before, leaves in the Soul a diſpoſition that carries and turns her towards God. But in a Child, who was never turned towards God, nothing but his Nature, and what God has fixt in him by the Decree of his firſt Will can be good; he is a Child of wrath, and muſt of neceſſity be damned: For it cannot be conceived that God will ever reward the diſpoſition of his heart, except you alſo conceive that God rewards diſorder.

Era. But, *Theodore*, Was not what you call Diſorder put into the Child by God himſelf? Since it is by the Decree of his Will, that upon certain motions of the Brain, certain thoughts ſhould reſult in the Soul, and the communication that is between the Brain of the Mother, and that of the Child, was eſtabliſhed by God.

The. I own it, *Eraſtus*, however it is not amiſs: It was requiſite that the *Veſtiges* in the Brain, and the motions of the Spirits, ſhould be attended with the thoughts and agitations of the Soul, for the Reaſons I have already told you, the chief whereof is, That Bodies do not deſerve the application of a Spirit that is made for none but God. It was neceſſary that *Adam* ſhould be told by preingaging Sentiments, by ſhort and unqueſtionable Proofs, that ſuch and ſuch things were good for his Body. It was fit alſo, that the impreſſions on the Mother's Brain ſhould communicate themſelves to that of the Child, for the full conformation of his Body. Thoſe things are moſt wiſely eſtabliſht; Diſorder is only found in Deſire.

It is good that there reſult in the Soul certain thoughts, when certain impreſſions form themſelves in the

the Brain; but it is not good that those impressions prompt us to the love of sensible things, and do not vanish when we desire it, or that our Body be not submitted to us. Now the Sin of the first Man hath caused this; for he became unworthy by his Sin, that God should suspend the communication of motions for his sake: so not being able to hinder the impression of the Bodies that act on us, from reaching as far as the chief part of the Brain, which is the seat of the Soul, we have of necessity the sentiments and motions of Concupiscence, tho God doth nothing else in us but deprive us of the power to hinder the natural communications of motions, that is to say, without acting in us. For Concupiscence precisely as such is nothing; it is in us only a want of power over our Body, which want proceeds from our Sin only, since it would be just without it that our Body were submitted to us.

Eraſt. I perceive plainly, *Theodorus*, that the union of our Spirit with our Body proceeds from God, and that our being Slaves to our Body, proceeds from Sin. All that is plain. But you, *Ariſtarchus*, are you perſuaded of the Sentiments and Proofs of *Theodorus*?

Ariſt. I dare not aſſent to them, for I fear to be miſtaken.

Eraſt. Perhaps it is becauſe *Theodorus* ſpeaks of the tranſmiſsion of original Sin, as of a thing not impoſſible to be explained, and you have hitherto believed it to be unexplainable; this may have prepoſſeſſed you: Or it may be your Sceptical Friends have ſo often laught at the ſimplicity of thoſe that believe what the Church teaches, that your imagination hath been formerly ſomewhat ſpoilt by it. For my part I remember that ſome time ago I was half ſtunned by

the

the reflection of the amazement that appeared in the looks of one of those false learned, at the appearance of an imaginary difficulty. But remembring what *Theodorus* tells me continually, not to suffer my self to be imposed upon by the Air and sensible impression of Men, I retired within my self, and could not help laughing at my pannick fear.

Arist. Do you think, *Eraste*, that I am so much a Fool as to let my self be imposed on.

Erast. You are too wise to do so, *Aristarchus*; but you are not yet wise enough not to receive some impression by the bold way and commanding Air of so many People that come to see you. It is impossible to be always upon our guard, and compare incessantly Mens words with the answers of inward truth; and you shall give me leave to tell you, that I even observed but two days ago by your countenance, that you are a Man born for company; that you are very full of complaisance, and very easily embrace the Sentiments of others: yet the business was of moment.

Arist. I remember it, it is true I was moved, that person spoke to me in a very strong and lively manner, but I soon came to my self.

Theod. Perhaps it is because the thing nearly concerned you, and you were not then about a Philosophical Question, or certain Points of Religion that have nothing common with the Senses.

Arist. It is true, but really I will no longer believe Men upon their word.

Theod. No, you do not believe them upon their word, for words being arbitrary, persuade only as far as they enlighten the mind; but the Air persuades naturally, and by impression: It persuades insensibly, and without letting us even know what it is that we are per-

perſuaded of; for all it can do by it ſelf is to agitate and trouble. I ſay it to you, *Ariſtarchus*, you confuſedly believe above a million of things which you do not know, and which the Commerce you have with the World hath heapt on your memory. But be not vext at it, there is no man but hath a very great number of thoſe confuſed Notions, for we are all ſenſible. There is no man made for Society, but is faſtned to other men, and receives in his brain the ſame impreſſions as thoſe who ſpeak to him with ſome emotion and force; and thoſe impreſsions are attended by thoſe confuſed judgments whereof I am ſpeaking.

Do not imagine that none but Children ſee and deſire what their Mother ſees and deſires, as I told you juſt now, when I explained to you the propagation of original Sin. All men live by opinion, they commonly ſee and deſire things, as thoſe they converſe with, proportionately to the need they have of their help. Children are ſo ſtrongly united with their Mothers, that they ſee nothing but what ſhe ſees. But men are capable to ſee and think of themſelves, they are not ſo narrowly united to other men, ſeeing they can live alone, they can think alone; but ſeeing they cannot live conveniently out of Society, they never think eaſily, and without pain, but when they ſuffer themſelves to be perſuaded by the air and way of thoſe who ſpeak to them.

Is it not true, *Ariſtarchus*, that there are ſome Perſons who have prepoſſeſſed you againſt what I have ſaid to you now of original Sin; not as *Eraſtus* thinks, by laughing at thoſe things, for you are too well converted to have ſtill any deference for the ſilly banters of the falſe learned; but rather gravely and piouſly inſpiring you with a ſecret averſion for ſome Senti-

ments

ments that seem new, and are too clear for such as are not used to see the light.

I know it, *Aristarchus*, and plainly perceive, that nothing but the disorder which they have caused in your mind by the darkness of their terms, and the decisive and scientific air of their quality, hinders you from assenting to what I have told you now. But let not this make you uneasy, there is a great number of others distinguisht by the same outward marks of Piety and Learning, that approve what your Friends condemn. If I thought it fitter to convince you by Authority than by Reason, I would let you see them; but you ought to convince your self by such Proofs as may be acceptable to the Person whom you design to convert. The most honest men are not infallible, even all those who seem so, are not such. But however it be, it is better to be sensible to light, than to the most pious and most sanctified Air; because God always enlightens, and oftentimes the Way and Air imposes and seduces.

Arist. This is true, *Theodorus*, but I fear that your Sentiment is not conformable to that of the holy Fathers.

Theod. But what occasion have you to fear it? Have you ever read any thing contrary to it in the Fathers? I see you have been told so gravely, and you have believed it in the simplicity of your heart.

Hath not St. *Austin*, who best understood the corruption of Nature, explained the propagation of Original Sin, by the example of hereditary Diseases? By that of gouty Parents, who beget Children subject to the Gout. And of the sick Trees, which yield a corrupted Seed, that produces nothing but bad Trees? For he knew that Original Sin can only communicate itself by

by the body, becauſe its principle is in the body, and that in ſome ſenſe it dwells in the body, as St. *Paul* ſaith.

As for the other Fathers that lived before St. *Auſtin*, they never undertook to make a particular diſcuſſion of the manner in which the tranſmiſſion of that Sin could be explained. Their Age was neither ſo incredulous nor malicious as ours; and it was not then neceſſary to give probable explications of our myſteries, to make thoſe who called themſelves Chriſtians believe them.

No, *Ariſtarchus*, I could never find that the Fathers were againſt what I have told you now: But I wonder to ſee that you who formerly uſed to treat the Churches Authority with ſo much indifference, are now ſo full of Veneration for the Fathers, as to be afraid without cauſe of diſſenting from them, by admitting ſome explications wherein we are not always obliged to follow them, provided we keep with them to the Faith and Doctrin of the Church.

You are too credulous, and your apprehenſions are not juſt; you do not meditate enough; you are like thoſe Children who walk by night without a light, that are afraid of all things, becauſe they ſee nothing.

Whilſt you did lead a careleſs ſort of life, the air of the Libertines uſed to perſuade you; and now you ſuffer your ſelf to be convinced by the air of piety and gravity of certain perſons, who have not always as much light and charity, as opinion and falſe zeal. You are leſs in danger of being miſtaken, but yet you are not in the way of truth. You ought to believe what muſt be believed, but you ought to ſee what

may, and consequently what must, be seen. I hope that if you make serious Reflections on the things, I have told you, without troubling your self with what your Friends think of it, your Uncertainties will be cleared, and you will no more suffer your self to be scared by a sort of Men who assume an unjust power over the mind of others, instead of bringing them to Reason by light and evidence.

I leave you, with *Eraſtus*, to confer together upon those things I have said to you, meditate with him, and endeavour either to convince your self, or to offer to me (that is) in a clear and evident manner, the Reasons that hinder you from doing it.

DIA-

DIALOGUE V.

Of the Reparation of Nature by Jeſus Chriſt.

Ariſt. WE have made many Reflections, *Eraſtus*, and I, upon Original Sin, and the Contagion that ſpreads it ſelf in Spirits: And have even found that Original Sin is tranſmitted into Children in ſome manner, as the Sentiments and Paſsions of paſsionate men communicate themſelves to thoſe that are in their preſence. For as the union that is between men for the benefit of Society, is the cauſe why a man by the air of his Face ſtamps on the brain of ſuch as are touched by it, the ſame impreſsions which the Paſsion that moves him forms within him; ſo the union of the Mother with her Child being very ſtrict, and the Childs wants very great, the Child's imagination muſt needs be ſullied by all the impreſsions and emotions of mind that incline the Mother to ſenſible things.

See the 7th *Chapter* of the 2d *Book* of the *Inquiry after Truth.*

Theod. Thus, *Ariſtarchus*, thoſe that live in the hurry of the world, that are held by too many things, that never conſult their reaſon, but ſuffer themſelves to be con-

vinced, moved and run down by every one that hath ſome ſtrength of imagination, and whoſe air being lively, is conſequently infectious, thoſe civil men of the Town, born for Company, who are always ſo ready to receive their Friends Sentiments; in a word, *Ariſtarchus*, thoſe Perſons that are ſuch as you have been till now, for you are the civileſt and moſt complaiſant Gentleman I ever knew, thoſe Perſons, I ſay, that are like you, have a double portion of Original Sin, that which they received from their Mother when they were in her womb, and that which they have ſuckt in by the commerce of the world.

You are happy, *Ariſtarchus*, in being able to withſtand the impreſſion of thoſe two Sins. How indebted are you not to inward truth for calling you back ſo loudly as to be heard by you in ſpight of the confuſed noiſe of your ſenſes and paſſions! You retire, ſometimes within your ſelf, as if your Reaſon was not corrupted, and the concupiſcence of original Sin had not been ſtrengthned, nor encreaſed by a concupiſcence of thirty years ſtanding. You are ſo much altered to day from what you were yeſterday, that I believe you will no longer find any conſiderable difficulty in our following Conferences. For all that hindered you from apprehending my ſentiments, proceeded from the obſcurity and diſorder wherein the converſe of the world had thrown you: ſo that being delivered from that diſorder, and reſolved to retire inceſſantly within your ſelf, you will hearken to the deciſions of that truth that preſides to all ſpirits.

Ariſt. Yes, *Theodorus*, I renounce all the impreſſions that uſed to prejudice me. I plainly ſee that all manner of union to ſenſible things, eſtrangeth and removeth us from truth: that the union which I had

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in my Mother's womb, made me a Sinner: that the union which I have had with my Relations, hath only given me a knowledge of the world, uſeful indeed to unite me with it, and make my ſelf conſiderable in it, but altogether unprofitable to the inquiry after truth. In ſhort, that the union which I have had with my Friends and other Men, hath filled me with a very great number of moſt dangerous prejudices, which you know better than I. I have hitherto lived by Opinion, I deſire now to live by Reaſon. I will believe nothing but what Faith and Charity oblige me to believe; in all other things I will conſult inward truth, and believe only what it ſhall tell me. I miſtruſt all Men, and even you *Theodorus*: you may ſpeak as much as you pleaſe, I will not believe you the ſooner for it, if truth doth not ſpeak as well as you. Your way of ſpeaking is able to impoſe upon Men, your Air is that of a Man perſuaded of what he ſaith, and that Air is perſuaſive; you ought to be feared as well as others. I honour and love you, but I honour and love truth more than you; and only love you ſo much the more, as I find you more united to that truth I love, than a world of others.

Theod. You are now in the beſt diſpoſition of a true Philoſopher, and a true Friend; for there is nothing but truth that enlightens true Philoſophers, and unites true Friends. I deſire you to obſerve and love in me nothing but truth. I ſpeak to you, but I do not enlighten you. I am not your light, nor your good, therefore do not believe me. If my Air and way of expreſſion make an impreſſion on your imagination, I would have you to know that it is not with a deſign to impoſe upon you. I have no deſign in it, I ſpeak naturally; and if I have ſome deſign, it is only that of

awakening your attention, by ſomething that may penetrate you.

Ariſt. I believe it, *Theodorus*; and as you would be ſorry to deceive me, you will not take it ill if I am aware of you, and do not believe you upon your word. But go on, I pray you. I am inwardly convinced of the matters which you proved to me yeſterday, and even of your way of explaining the tranſmiſſion of Original Sin.

Theod. I told you yeſterday ſome things that are not abſolutely neceſſary for what will follow. There is no neceſſity of your being perſuaded of the manner how *Adam* could happen to fall, nor how his Sin could tranſmit it ſelf into his Off-ſpring. It is enough that you know that Men are born in Sin and Corruption; that there is an enmity between God and them; that their body is not under their ſubjection; and that conſequently their mind is in darkneſs, and their heart in ſin and diſorder.

You cannot doubt of theſe things, if you are perſuaded of what I told you yeſterday, or make ſome reflections on the ſtrugling that you feel within you of your ſelf againſt your ſelf, of the law of your mind againſt that of your body, of your ſelf after the inward man, againſt your ſelf after the outward and ſenſible man.

You believe, *Ariſtarchus*, that the order of things is reverſed, it muſt therefore be re-eſtabliſht. But how ſhall that be done? Shall it be by the Heathens Philoſophy? They are ignorant of our Ills, and cannot cure them. Shall it be by the Religion of the Deiſts? They will not admit of a Mediator. Shall it be by the Law of *Mahomet*? it encreaſeth Concupiſcence. Shall it be then by the Law of *Moſes*? it is juſt and holy,

holy, I own it; but who ſhall keep it? It ſhews us Sin, it makes us ſenſible of the deceaſe, it makes us know the want of the Phyſician, and the need of Grace, that there muſt be a Mediator to reconcile Mankind to God; but it doth not give us that Mediator: it promiſes, repreſents and gives us an image of him, but it doth not poſſeſs him. *Moſes* himſelf hath need of an Interceſſor to God; and if he was a Mediator and Interceſſor between God and his People, it was only as a Type of the true Mediator between God and men. His Mediation was only to obtain for them a long life upon earth, and temporal enjoyments, for he doth not promiſe them Heaven: he doth not reunite them to God: he doth not merit them Charity. In fine, he doth not ſend them the Holy Ghoſt, that alone removes the fear of Slaves, and alone gives right to the inheritance of Children.

None but Chriſt is capable to make peace between God and men: for none but him can atone the juſtice of God, by the excellency of his Sacrifice; intercede to God, by the dignity of his Prieſthood; obtain all things, and ſend us the Holy Ghoſt, by the quality of his Perſon. None but him that came down from Heaven, can take us thither with him; and none but him that is united to God by an union of ſubſtance, can reunite us to God by a ſupernatural union; none but the true Son of God can intitle us to his Adoption.

God having made all things by his Son, and for him, it was juſt he ſhould repair all things by him, and eſtabliſh him Head of his Church, Judge over his People, and Sovereign Lord of all the Creation.

Who but God-man could retribute to God an honour worthy of him, have a fellow-ſuffering of our

miſeries, and ſanctify them in his Perſon? Who but him could be predeſtinated before the beginning of time, as a work worthy of God, repreſented in all Ages as the end of the Law, and wiſhed for by all Nations, as the only Perſon able to deliver them from their miſery?

Man being become ſenſible and carnal, it was neceſſary that the Word ſhould be made Man, that the intelligible Light ſhould make himſelf ſenſible, and that he who enlightens all Men in the deepeſt receſs of their reaſon, ſhould inſtruct them likewiſe by their Senſes, by Miracles, Parables, and familiar Compariſons.

United as we are to all corporeal Beings, and having a dependence upon whatſoever we are united to, it was neceſſary that we ſhould be taught Self-denial, Privation and Repentance, and ſtrengthned by the cheriſhing delights of Grace, as alſo comforted by the ſweetneſs of Hope.

The Chriſtian Religion doth whatever ought to be done: and Chriſtian Morality teaches whatſoever ought to be known. But I muſt prove to you more at large, and by a method that may convince your Friend, that none but the Chriſtian Religion can re-eſtabliſh the Order that Sin hath reverſed.

I begin with thoſe things that concern Religion, and then will come to Morality.

I pray you therefore to be attentive, *Ariſtarchus*. Do you believe that God is merciful?

Ariſt. Can I not believe it?

Theod. And do you believe that he is juſt?

Ariſt. Yes certainly.

Theod.

Theod. * You muſt believe then that it is impoſſible that Sin can remain unpuniſhed, and that God muſt needs revenge himſelf on ſuch as offend him, and that it is neceſſary that he ſatisfy himſelf, by atoning his Juſtice.

* *This Work being chiefly againſt ſuch as have but little deference to the Authority of the Fathers, I do not quote them to prove my Aſſertions, tho' I give their Arguments, when I judge them proper for my deſign. When I quoted* The Inquiry after Truth, *the Reaſon was, that the Reader may ſee in that Book the things that I have not ſufficiently explained in this. However, it is eaſy to perceive, that I do not pretend to convince any one by the Authority of that Book, I quote it as* Geometricians *do* Euclid *and* Apollonius.

Ariſt. I don't know that *Theodorus*, for being merciful, he can pardon when he pleaſeth.

Theod. But can he be willing to do it?

Ariſt. What a Queſtion that is! Men themſelves can do that.

Theod. Men can forgive when they are offended: they ought not to revenge themſelves, nor have they power to do it. As they love themſelves to exceſs, they would be ſure to exceed; being Sinners, they would condemn themſelves; and whatſoever offends them being ordained by God, they would be guilty of Rebellion. For the only thing wherein God hath no hand, to wit, the inward malice of their Enemies, doth them no harm: they have no right to oblige others to love them, neither can they take any revenge for want of that love that doth not belong to them.

But if Men had received the ſovereign wiſdom and power to judge and puniſh, if their eſſential Will was the Order, if they could not act againſt that Order, might they not puniſh ſuch Crimes as would be com-

committed against God, or pardon Sin and Disorder, and yet not offend the Law and Order?

But supposing they could, do you think they might also secure to Sinners the means of attaining Felicity?

They would certainly make an ill use of their power, and by overthrowing the order of Justice, prove themselves Sinners, and thereby be altogether destitute of either love to God, or zeal for his glory.

Do you think God can reverse the essential order of things, or fight against himself? Do you imagin it is possible he should not love himself, or forbear his own satisfaction, by neglecting his Justice, and that mercy which you conceive to be a virtue in us, to be a perfection in God?

No, *Aristarchus*, God is not merciful in the same manner as we are; that Clemency would be contrary to his Justice. That Sinners be happy, implies contradiction, if not on the part of Sinners, at least on that of him that is omnipotent, and cannot act against the essential order of things, on the part, I say, of him that is essentially just. God must punish Sin, and if he hath a mind to spare those that commit it, for the end that he proposed to himself in the construction of his work, it is necessary that a Sacrifice more worthy of his greatness and justice than they are, should receive the blow that was to make them eternally miserable. Thus God may be merciful.

Things being thus, you easily see what need we stand in of Christ's satisfaction. That the Mediator of the *Arians* and *Socinians*, is a Mediator who can never atone for them, nor reconcile them to God:

And

And that none but those who believe that Jesus Christ is really God, because none but a God can justifie and save us, in a word that none but those who call upon Christ by that name which the Scripture gives him, that expresses so well his qualities, *Jehovah Justitia nostra, God our Righteousness*, can have a full assurance in his Sacrifice.

Observe, *Aristarchus*, that God doth whatever he ought to do.

Arist. But God lieth under no obligation to any one.

Theod. I own it. But God doth whatever he is obliged to for his own sake. Men offend and oppose him, and overturn the order of things: ought not he then to revenge himself, satisfy his Justice, and punish those that offend him? For I grant that, as for our sakes, God is obliged to do no more than he pleaseth: But he is obliged to do something for himself, and that being granted, it is just to believe that he will not omit to do it; for he loveth himself, and is willing to do whatever he ought to do for himself. I own that there is no Law that constrains him, but that he is to himself his own Law. However he is to himself inviolably a Law, and must of necessity love himself, tho' nothing forces him to love himself, but himself.

Arist. But, *Theodorus*, will you dive into God's Councels, and give Bounds to his Wisdom and Power? Do you think that God could not satisfie his Justice otherwise, than by the death of his Son? If it be so——

Theod. I understand you, *Aristarchus*, God's Justice could have been satisfied by a thousand other means. The least Suffering; the least Action of God-Man could

could fully satisfy God's Justice for all our Crimes; for the merit of it is infinite, by the dignity of the Person. But God could not be fully satisfied by any other Satisfaction, than that of a Divine Person. Nothing is worthy of God, but God himself. All manner of offence against God is infinitely criminal, and there is nothing Infinite but God. He cannot therefore be satisfied without having a hand in it: such is the Immensity of his greatness.

Tho' God had sacrificed all the Creation to his wrath, and annihilated all his Works, that Sacrifice would still have been unworthy of him. But God had not made the world to annihilate it, he had made it for him that hath restored it; for his Son was predestinated before all Ages, to be the Chief of it. He is the First-born of all Creatures, the Beginning of the Lord's Ways, the Beginning, End and Perfection of all the Works of God; for whatever God hath made, is only perfectly worthy of God, through Christ.

I don't know, *Aristarchus*, whether your thoughts follow mine, perhaps I run too fast: But, pray, what is it you would say to me?

Arist. I'le tell you. God being infinitely wise and powerful: why could he not form a Creature sufficiently noble, and raised above Sinners, to atone for them?

Theod. How! *Aristarchus*, Shall a Creature undertake to reconcile Sinners? Plead for them? Shew any love for them? That is, for the damned. (For if we are not ranked with the damned, it is because we are made free in Christ.) But, supposing with you, that a Creature could do all this, satisfie for us, and free us by his satisfaction, it follows that we are indebted to

that

that Creature and his Slaves: that our obligations to him ought to divide our love between God and him; and that our Reſtoration being perhaps a greater good to us than our Creation, we ought to love him better than God himſelf, if we ought to love moſt the things that do us moſt good.

Yet God requires that we ſhould love him in all things, and that all the motion of love which he cauſes in us, tend towards him: and he will not only be eſteemed by us as the firſt Cauſe and Being, but alſo beloved in all things, as the only true cauſe of whatever the Creatures ſeem to produce in us.

This is the order of things. Now it would be reverſed, and even its overturning juſtified, ſhould your Notion of God's deſign to give us another Reſtorer than himſelf, ſubſiſt. For that deſign would in ſome manner juſtify a Love not ſolely tending towards God; ſince that deſign propoſes to us another than God for an Object of our Love, when it propoſes to us a Creature endowed with an excellency ſufficient to oblige us really, and by himſelf.

Ariſt. But are we not under ſome Obligation to other Men that pray for us? to the Saints in Heaven that intercede for us? *Pontificii Loquuntur.*

Theod. Yes, *Ariſtarchus*, but that Obligation ought not in reaſon to divide our Love. All the good will that other Men have towards us is unefficacious: they cannot do us the leaſt good through themſelves.

You do not doubt that all other Men merit but in and through Chriſt; for Chriſt himſelf doth only merit our Salvation, and duly ſatisfies his Father as he is his Son: ſo that there being nothing really and in it ſelf capable to do us good without God, all our life

life ought to tend towards him. This is the order of things, he hath eſtabliſhed that order at our Creation; for he hath only made us with a proſpect of the beauty of that order, having only made us to love him. How can it then be imagined that he would deſtroy that order? But let us ſuppoſe that a Creature ſo excellent in his nature were made, and would ſatisfie for us, and ſacrifice for our ſakes himſelf, and what ever he hath; his Sacrifice would ſtill be unworthy of God's Juſtice, and his Satisfaction unequal to the immenſity of our offences, ſince any offence committed againſt God is infinite, by reaſon of his infinite dignity.

To ſtrike our Sovereign on the Face, is a greater Crime than to kill our Slave, the offence growing proportionably to the dignity of the offended party, above that of the offender.

This being granted, it followeth that God would not be fully ſatisfied by that Creature, and therefore it cannot be ſuppoſed that he would ever make ſuch a Creature to ſatisfy his Juſtice, if he would be fully ſatisfied. But do you not think, *Ariſtarchus*, that God, who loves himſelf perfectly, is obliged to do himſelf right, by being willing to ſatisfy himſelf fully.

But ſtill ſuppoſing with you, that God might have taken another Method for the reſtoration of his work, than his Sons Incarnation, what Religion aſſures us that he hath done ſo? Where is a Creature that introduces us to God, or a Religion that teaches this Myſtery of our Reconciliation with God? If it be the Religion of the *Chineſes*, or that of the *Tartars*, perhaps it may not be amiſs to follow it: But there is no other Religion but the Chriſtian, that acknowledges Original Sin, and the general depravation of Nature, much

much leſs doth any other acknowledg a Creature raiſed above Mankind, by the excellency of his Nature, to be their Victim.

For, after all, if the *Jews* invoke *Abraham*, *Moſes*, and their Prophets, ſtill they believe them to be Men, and ſuch whoſe principal greatneſs conſiſts, in being the ſhadow and figure of their Meſſiah, and our Redeemer. Therefore there can be no other Religion than the Chriſtian, nor any other Mediator than Chriſt; neither can there be any Religion ſo excellent, nor ſo worthy of God, as that we profeſs; for there is no other way ſo worthy of God, whereby he could have repair'd his work, as is that we believe he hath taken. In fine, God's work repair'd is even much more worthy of God, by the holineſs of its Reſtorer, than it was in its natural perfection.

Eraſt. What you tell us, ſeems to me very true: If God had not known that the reparation of his work would yield him more glory than its firſt conſtruction, it ſeems plain to me, that he would not have ſuffer'd it to grow corrupt. For, after all, God was not ſurprized at *Adam*'s diſobedience: he hath foreſeen his Fall before his Creation, and alſo the corruption that Fall was to ſpread over all his work.

Theod. You are in the right, *Eraſtus*, God's firſt deſign hath been the Incarnation of his Son. We were made for him, tho' he took Fleſh for us. We were made after his own Image, for he is Man in God's intent before Mankind was produced. God hath choſen us in him before the Creation of the World; and made all things by him, and for him. For Chriſt is the Man for whom God hath made all things. He was predeſtinated to be the chief of Angels and Saints, even of the Angels

Angels that are before the Saints. But he was before all things in God's deſign, for the members are made for the head, and not the head for the members.

As I ſaid it to you, it is through the Incarnation of the Son, that the Father is worſhip'd as he ought to be. For what ſignifie the veneration of Men and Angels, if not offer'd through Chriſt? But if it be certain that God will be worſhip'd as he ought to be, it is as certain that he will be worſhip'd through his Son; and therefore it is ſure that God's chief end is the Incarnation of his Son, and that the Creation of Men and Angels enters into his deſign, only on the account of his Son; he having made them for no other end, but that he might receive their adorations through his Son, and ſuffer'd *Adam*'s Sin, and the corruption of Nature, to make way for the Incarnation of his Son; that is, to make it neceſſary, or be its occaſion.

Dialog. 2.

All this ſeems moſt certain to me, but pray, *Ariſtarchus*, what think you of it?

Ariſt. I don't know yet what to think on't.

Eraſt. How! Sir, can you ſtill be in doubt about it? I'le convince you preſently.

A Workman that makes a piece of Workmanſhip for his own private uſe, and ſurely foreſees that if he expoſe it in the way, ſome one or other will certainly break it, doth not act prudently, if he doth not lay it in a ſafe place.

Ariſt. I own it.

Eraſt. Very well. But if a Workman foreſee, that laying his Work where he ought to lay it, and where it will be broken, he ſhall be paid infinitely more for it than it is worth; do you think he ought to hide it, or lay it in an improper place to preſerve it,

it, principally if he can without the leaſt trouble to himſelf make ſuch a piece of workmanſhip.

Ariſt. In that caſe, *Eraſtus*, he ought to place it in its true and right place, and not alter his deſign, but, on the contrary, make an end of his work; if not that it may be broken, at leaſt that he may be paid for it more than it is worth, and lay hold on the accident that will befall his work, as on a favourable opportunity of enriching himſelf: for I ſuppoſe that this ſame workman thinks more on himſelf, and growing rich, than on any thing elſe.

Eraſt. Obſerve me then. God is that Workman who works for himſelf, and minds nothing but his own glory. All the pure Creatures cannot honour him as he deſerves, neither can all his works enrich him. Do you conceive then that he will make them?

Beſides, if he makes Man, and leaves him to himſelf, if he doth not hinder his freedom, and will be loved by him with a love of choice, an underſtanding love, perfectly worthy a reaſonable Creature; in a word, if he places Man at firſt in the ſtate he ought to be in, yet foreſees that Man ſhall ceaſe to love him, and ſhall diſhonour him, do you conceive that he will make him? Yet, *Ariſtarchus*, we are made, and God is wiſe. He hath made us to honour him, and the honour we can pay unto him, is not worthy of him. But beſides this, in ſtead of honouring him as much as we can, we diſhonour and diſobey him, and prefer the love of the body to the love of God: he hath foreſeen the corruption of our heart before its formation. Where lieth then his wiſdom? How will you juſtify it? What think you of a Workman, who working for himſelf, makes a work that is of no uſe to him? Remember what you ſaid of a Work-

man, who makes a piece of work, and expoſes it, tho he knows that ſome one or other will break it. God is wiſe, *Ariſtarchus*, but what hath he done? This he hath done; he hath predeſtinated Jeſus Chriſt from all Eternity to be the head of his works, that Chriſt, and all Creatures through him, may pay to him an honour worthy of him. He hath placed Man in the ſtate he ought to be placed in, for the Reaſons that have been told you. He hath foreſeen his Fall, and permitted it, that it might advance his great End. Thus his Wiſdom is juſtified; and he becomes, if I may ſay ſo, more rich and powerful than he was. He commands his Son who is his equal, and judges and puniſhes him for us; he fully revenges and ſatisfies himſelf for our ſins. But he receives from him, and from us through him, ſuch honours as are worthy of his greatneſs and majeſty. Now what do you think of what *Theodorus* ſaid to you?

Dialog. 2.

Ariſt. Methinks he proves well enough his Aſſertion. However, all he hath ſaid now, ſuppoſes in God a plurality of perſons; for no one doth pay an honour or an atonement to his own ſelf.

Theod. You miſtake the Point utterly, *Ariſtarchus*, far from this, becauſe no one doth pay an honour or an atonement to his own ſelf, I prove, and do not ſuppoſe in God a plurality of perſons. To convince you of it, there needs only to reaſſume what *Eraſtus* ſaid.

God acts only for his glory, but all the Creation cannot pay him an honour worthy of him; it cannot therefore be ſuppoſed that he will make any Creatures, unleſs it be to declare that a pure Creature can yield him ſome glory. It follows then, that ſince he hath

hath been pleaſed to make us, he hath done it in order to his glory. But we cannot contribute to it, unleſs he join with us: Now, as you have well obſerved it, a perſon cannot honour himſelf; therefore there is in God a plurality of perſons. It is then neceſſary that a Divine Perſon, and principally that by whom all things were made, ſanctify by his dignity all other Creatures.

The Son ought to offer to the Father a Kingdom over which the Father may reign with honour; the Son ought to erect to him a Temple, whereof he himſelf is the Chief Stone; eſtabliſh a Prieſthood, whereof he himſelf is the High Prieſt; and aſſemble a Church, whereof he is the Head. In a word, he ought to make his work worthy of him, for whoſe honour he hath made it: And if we ſuppoſe that God (who never acts but for his glory) reſolved to produce ſomething out of himſelf, ſeeing no one can honour his own ſelf, we muſt admit in God plurality of perſons.

Beſides, God hath from all Eternity foreſeen the diſorder that was to ariſe in his Work; he could have prevented it, yet hath not done it. Then the reparation of his Work muſt needs be a greater honour to him than its firſt Creation, ſince God's rule and motive in his operations is always his own glory. However, the diſorder of Nature, and the ſhame of Sin, diſhonour God much more than the puniſhment and ſatisfaction of Creatures honour him, the offence of Sinners being infinite, by the dignity of the perſon that is offended; and it being impoſſible that God can be ſatisfied, unleſs he be our own Mediator. But, as you have wiſely ſaid, none can pay an atonement to themſelves, and therefore there muſt be a plurality of

persons in God. It is necessary that a Divine person, and chiefly that person by whom God made all things, repair the disorder that is hapned in his work, and satisfy God for that same work, if God will preserve it. For, after all, God who suffered Sin for his glory, must have designed a Sacrifice capable of yielding him more honour, than Sin can bring him dishonour. So we must conclude, that there is in God a plurality of persons, since he hath not made Creatures capable of honouring him as he deserves, and especially since he suffers such Crimes as no Creature can expiate.

Eraſt. But, pray, what do you think of the damned, they cannot satisfy God's Justice, and yet he doth not annihilate them?

Theod. It is true, *Eraſtus*, God did not make them to be annihilated; but he would not have made them, or would not keep them in being without Christ: for their punishment, tho' eternal, is still too slight to satisfy the Justice of a revenging God. The damned should suffer at least according to their whole capacity, yet they do not; for there are degrees of pain among them, tho' their Souls being equal, their capacity to suffer must be equal: But Christ by his quality bears what is wanting to honour perfectly the Divine Justice, and in the deformity which those miserable Wretches cause in the beauty of the Universe, there is this order at least, that the inequality of their punishment bears a proportion with that of their offences. However, it would be better for them not to be, than to have such a miserable being; it is plain that Christ, who merits the conservation of their existence, and upholds them in the order of his Justice, is rather their Judge than their Saviour. Thus, *Eraſtus*, all things subsist in Christ, he preserves his work

work after he hath cleanſed it from the filthineſs of ſin, and reconciles, through his blood, all Creatures with God, as to what concerns the preſervation of their being: But if he gives peace to Heaven and Earth, he no leſs kindles an everlaſting War in Hell.

Thus you ſee, *Ariſtarchus*, how all the ſeveral parts of Religion prove and maintain one another. What I have told you, is not a Circle without Principles; for my Principles are that we are made, that Nature is corrupt, and that God acts only for his glory: You do not deny them.

Ariſt. No, *Theodorus*, I am convinced; But I have ſome reluctancy to do it, for what you tell me, ſeems new to me.

Theod. Yes, *Ariſtarchus*, what I tell you is new to the generality of Mankind, and to ſuch Chriſtians as do not ſufficiently underſtand the myſtery of the Religion they profeſs.

Chriſt is not known among worldly Men, they do not think on his greatneſs, neither do they know how he is the beginning and end of all things. Thoſe holy perſons that read the Scripture with an intention to find Chriſt, never fail to find him there, for he is in every place of it: But they have not the ſpirit of this world, but that of God, whereby they know the greatneſs of the Gift that God hath imparted to them. The outward and ſenſible Man is not capable of the things which the Divine Spirit teacheth us; *for the eye hath not ſeen, the ear hath not heard, nor the heart of man ever underſtood what God hath prepared for thoſe that love him.*

I do not only ſpeak of thoſe falſe learned who deny the corruption of Nature, the neceſſity of Grace, and the Divinity of Chriſt, yet aſſume the quality of

Christians. I also speak of those who live in the bosom of the Church, but have little love for Religion. It is impossible they should be very well learned in the knowledge of Christ, seeing they do not love him, and do not study the Scriptures, professing the Christian Religion, perhaps only, because it is that of their Parents.

Arist. You have told us a great many things both to day and yesterday, since I have seen my Friend; I imagin that he wants me, as I do, to know what he will think of these things: I must leave you to go to him.

Theod. Do, *Aristarchus*, make him sensible of the general corruption of Nature, and the enmity that is between God and man; and endeavor to demonstrate plainly to him, the necessity of Christ's satisfaction.

If you find that he receives your Sentiments as he ought, and is willing to be instructed, immediately fall on the praises of our Redeemer, and stir him up to the love of his Saviour, by the consideration of the chief obligations he hath to him.

Tell him, That Christ is *the Way*, *the Truth*, and *the Life*: That he is our intelligible *light*, that enlightens us in the deepest recess of our Reason; and our sensible *light*, that instructs us by Miracles, by Parables, and Faith: That he alone is the food of the Soul: That his light is the sole producer of Charity, and that none but him can give us the *holy Spirit, whereby we become the children of God.* Tell him, that he hath been predestinated before all time to be our King and Chief, our Pastor and Law-giver: That God receives our Prayers through him only: That we are made clean only by his blood, and enter into the *Holy of Holies*, only through his Sacrifice. In short, That Christ

Chriſt is all things to us; that in him we are new creatures, and new men, that have not been cõdemned in *Adam*; that without Chriſt we are nothing, have right to nothing, but are ſold to Sin, Slaves to the Devils, and the eternal objects of God's wrath.

Uſe all your endeavors to make him think on Chriſt, to unite him to, and make him eſteem and love Chriſt; and conclude with theſe words of St *Paul* at the end of one of his Epiſtles, *If any man love not the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, let him be Anathema, Maran-atha,* 1 Cor. 16. 22.

DIALOGUE VI.

The Truth of the Chriſtian Religion proved by other Reaſons.

Ariſt. AH! *Theodorus*, how unſatisfy'd am I in my Friend!

Theod. Yes, *Ariſtarchus*, I can eaſily ſee it; the Air of your Countenance does not rejoice thoſe that examin it, 'tis not an Air of Triumph, or of Victory, that might pleaſe thoſe who take part of it: But how cou'd he reſiſt you?

Ariſt. As I was well perſuaded of the truth of the Chriſtian Religion, by the proofs of original Sin, and the neceſſity of a Mediator; ſo I imagined I cou'd convince him, by propoſing the ſame proofs; but I know not to what I ſhould attribute the ill ſucceſs of my words: when I ſpoke to him, inſtead of perſuading him, I provoked him, and he rejected all that I propoſed to him with a kind of ſcorn; he would not ſo much as agree with me in common Notions, but continually ſaid, that my Reaſons were the Reaſons of Philoſophy.

Such Anſwers grieved me; I ſtrove to convince him, and continued to repeat the ſame things, hoping that

that at laſt he would reflect, but all my Efforts were entirely loſt.

'Tis ſomething ſtrange, *Theodorus*, that a Man can't convince others of the ſame thing that he himſelf is fully convinced of; for it appears to me, that all Men ought to ſee the ſame things.

Theod. If all Men were equally attentive to inward truth, they would all equally ſee the ſame things; but your Friend is not like you, he is taken up with a multitude of things, and his pride has now for many years kept him unconverſant even with himſelf: ſo that abſtracted proofs and reaſonings built upon Notions, which have no dependance of the ſenſes, perſuade him not, becauſe theſe proofs don't touch him, and becauſe he has many confuſed reaſons which hinder his application to them.

When a Man has diſcovered a Geometrical Demonſtration, he can convince all Men of it, to whom he clearly propoſes it, becauſe that theſe things are ſenſible, that they freely apply themſelves to them, that there's no reaſon why they ſhould not believe them, that they are not prepoſſeſs'd by the authority of Men that deny them, and that when they ſee theſe kinds of truth, they ſee them after a ſenſible manner: But 'tis not the ſame with certain truths which are contrary to our inclinations, there we think not ſeriouſly, and we have many reaſons not to believe them.

It's neceſſary, *Ariſtarchus*, that I demonſtrate to you the truth of the Chriſtian Religion, by more ſenſible proofs than thoſe of our preceding Conferences, it may be your Friend will more willingly hearken to them.

Do you take his place, and object whatever you can imagin againſt what I ſhall offer, I only ſuppoſe that God hath made our Souls *to know and love him:* 'Tis what your Friend aſſents to.

You have heard, *Ariſtarchus*, of one *Moſes*, the famous Legiſlator of the *Jews*, to whom God gave the Ten Commandments upon Mount *Sinai*; Do you believe what the Scripture ſays of him?

Ariſt. But what if he was a Cheat, an Impoſtor?

Theod. Very well, *Ariſtarchus*, you ſuppoſe your ſelf under your Friend's character; but you know that he muſt have an exceſſive bold ſpirit, I would ſay, the moſt ignorant and moſt tranſported of bold ſpirits, who dares ſay, that *Moſes* was a Cheat; you do much honour to your Friend.

Ariſt. I know what I ſay.

Theod. Well then, if you know him ſo well, ſpeak for him, I will engage him in your perſon. You have reaſon, *Ariſtarchus*, and ought not to oppoſe a Sentiment that is univerſally received by all reaſonable perſons, unleſs you have good proofs that they are deceived.

Ariſt. There is much prejudice—

Theod. Right, but this common Reaſon does not juſtifie you, nor will it juſtifie the moſt extravagant doubts that may be raiſed; but, I may tell you, that there was never any Man that could be more unreaſonably accuſed of Impoſture than *Moſes*.

'Tis one eſſential quality of a Cheat to avoid the Light; but the Miracles of *Moſes* were wrought before all the people, in the ſight of Six hundred thouſand fighting Men, there was a great number of them, and ſome were repeated every day for many years

to-

ogether: But not to ſtay upon theſe unprofitable proofs, let us reflect upon the manner how the *Iſraelites* were nouriſhed in the Wilderneſs forty years, every morning the Earth was covered with Manna, except the Sabbath day; when it was kept till the next day, it was corrupted, and full of Worms, except the Sabbath day. This Manna ceaſed to fall, when the *Iſraelites* had once eaten of the fruits of the Land of *Canaan*, and from that time they never ſaw it fall.

Can one doubt of a Fact which was continued Forty years? Or can one attribute to a natural Cauſe this Rain or Dew which fell but for Forty years, which ceaſed to fall every *Saturday*, and which could not be kept without corruption but upon *Saturdays*? Is *Saturdays* Air or Sun different from that of other days? Did the firſt Repaſt which the *Iſraelites* had in the Land of *Canaan*, change the face of Heaven, or the ſituation of the Stars, which cauſed it to rain Manna? Is't not evident by theſe Circumſtances, that this Rain was not Natural?

Ariſt. But what proofs have you that the *Pentateuch*, *Joſhua*, and other Books from whence you borrow what is ſpoken of Manna, are true? If they were Fabulous——

Theod. If they were Fabulous, *Ariſtarchus*, the *Jews* were Men of a different nature from us, they were Fools, and ſtupid, to a very improbable degree.

Think you, *Ariſtarchus*, that Men who have but a little of common Senſe, would without Reaſon or Examination receive Books as authentic, and as a Rule of their Faith and Conduct. I'll explain my ſelf.——

Think

Think you, that a whole Nation would ſubmit to a Law, ſo very ſevere and painful, by the force of Arms or ſome reaſon of Intereſt, without being compelled thereto, as 'twere, by Divine Authority?

Think you, that upon a Fabulous Hiſtory, derived from our Anceſtors, we ſhould be ſo ſtupid and inſenſible, blindly to ſubmit our ſelves to a Ceremony ſo ſhameful and incommodious as is that of Circumciſion? How can it be imagined that the *Jews* receiv'd the Law which they obſerve, and the Books which they call Canonical, without conſideration? Theſe Books flatter them not, they continually menace and reproach them with the ſtupidity, infidelity and malice of their Anceſtors.

The *Jews* were not obliged by force of Arms to receive theſe authentic Books, wherefore do they receive them? wherefore do they preſerve them ſo carefully? wherefore are there no Men ſo conſtant as they to the Religion of their Fathers? 'Tis, without doubt, either becauſe the *Jews* are not Men as we are, or rather becauſe their Religion and Books have all the poſſible characters of truth.

But, *Ariſtarchus*, you believe that God hath made us to know and love him, and to make uſe of the moſt reaſonable Religion; for there muſt be an outward worſhip for Men that make uſe of their ſenſes, and who live in ſociety. We muſt then, of all Books that treat of Religion, believe thoſe that have the greateſt appearance of truth; but there are none comparable to the Scripture, for the Reaſons I have told you, as alſo for innumerable other Reaſons. We ought then to look upon theſe Books as our Rule, and there to ſearch the Religion which we ought to follow. And if we deceive our ſelves in the choice

of

of these Books, our Error would only depend on this, that there would be no mark to discern sacred Books from profane; or rather from this, that there would be neither sacred Books nor Religion which were pleasing to God.

Arist. What you say, *Theodorus*, is highly reasonable; but my Friend will rashly tell me, that *Mahomet* was a Prophet, and that the *Alcoran* is a Divine Book, how would you have me to answer him?

Theod. Compare the Miracles of *Moses*, with those of that Impostor, and shew him what difference there is betwixt his making a tame Pigeon whisper in his Ear before all the people, or making a famisht Bull bring him a Book through the multitude, or attributing a * Disease shameful enough to the apparition and dazzling lustre of the Angel *Gabriel*, and the Miracles which confirm the mission of *Moses*, or the covering the Earth with Insects, changing Water into Blood, filling the Air with thick darkness, agitating it by Thunder, inflaming it by Lightning, making it to rain celestial Food for forty years, to be conducted by a Cloud in the day-time, and Fire by night, both of them in form of a Pillar; I pass over many other Miracles that God performed by *Moses* in the sight of all *Egypt*, and all the people of *Israel*.

* *The Falling-sickness.*

The *Alcoran* relates no such Miracles in favour of *Mahomet*, it does not so much as mention those which I have already spoken of, which are such gross cheats*; and 'tis well known that many Men despised the false Prophet which is the Author of them, because he did no Miracle.

* Chap. *of the Cow, of Women, and other things*, of the version of *Du Rier*.

But,

But, *Ariſtarchus*, let us not inſiſt altogether upon this; the *Alcoran* deſtroys itſelf by itſelf, as well as *Judaiſm*, as you ſhall ſee preſently. I'll ſuppoſe that *Mahomet* was a Prophet, and that his Book is as authentic as the Old Teſtament; grant to me that there is at leaſt an equal Authority to two Books ſo different, and let us firſt ſee which is the Religion that the holy Scripture propounds to us.

Ariſt. How, *Theodorus*, will you be a *Jew*?

Theod. Yes certainly, *Ariſtarchus*, if *Judaiſm* be the Law which the holy Scripture propoſes to us as capable of making moſt perfect and happy; as for me, I look upon holy Scripture as a Divine Book, but perhaps *Judaiſm*, as to the Letter, is not the end of the Law.

Take heed, *Ariſtarchus*, think you that Beaſts have a Soul? I mean a Subſtance which animates or informs their Body, and which is more noble than it.

Ariſt. To what purpoſe?

Theod. Only anſwer.

Ariſt. Yes, I believe that Beaſts have a Soul, and that their Soul is more noble than their Body.

Theod. I'll prove that you are miſtaken; what is the end, the good or happineſs of Beaſts? think you that Beaſts have any other natural Felicity, than the enjoyment of their Bodies?

Ariſt. No, I believe the end of Beaſts is to eat and drink.

Theod. Then God hath made the Soul of Beaſts for the enjoyment of their Body, but the Soul of Beaſts is more noble than their Body. Then God has not well ordered his work, nor propoſed to Beaſts an end worthy of them, if that which makes them more

happy

happy and perfect, must be more noble than that which receives its happiness and perfection. Thus you ought to observe, that God has not given to Beasts a Soul distinct from their body, or more noble than it; or else you ought to begin again, and say, that Beasts have some other Felicity than that of drinking and eating, and of enjoying their Body.

Arist. This Reason convinces me, but what would you conclude from thence?

Theod. Thus, *Aristarchus*, you believe that the *Jews* were Men as we are, and that they had a Soul, I would say a Substance which thinks, perceives, wills, and reasons, and is distinct from the Body; your Friend, whose place you take, being a *Cartesian*, does not doubt of this.

Arist. 'Tis true, he proves demonstratively, that the Existence of the Soul is more certain than that of the Body.

Theod. This being granted, *Aristarchus*, I say that *Judaism*, as to the Letter, is not a Religion which God has established for Men; and that it could not render the *Jews* either more perfect, or more happy, because *Moses* propounded no other Felicity to the *Jews*, than the enjoyment of the Body; and that this sort of happiness is only proper for Beasts, if it is true that Beasts have a Soul.

After *Moses* had propounded this carnal and ceremonial Law to the *Jews*, which was a shadow of things to come, he promised that if they would observe it, their Land should be fruitful; that they should have great Families, and numerous Flocks; that they should be Masters over their Enemies; and that God would preserve them as *Deut.* 28.

as a People which he had choſen: But if they would not obſerve it, he told them that they ſhould want all the neceſſaries of life, and foretold thoſe temporal Evils which are come upon them. In fine, he promiſed no other recompence or puniſhment, no other happineſs or miſery, than the enjoyment or privation of Bodies: it ſeems there was no Hell, no Paradiſe, no Eternity for the *Jews*.

Ariſt. But whence comes that? 'Tis certain the *Jews* were very groſs and carnal.

Theod. 'Tis not, *Ariſtarchus*, that the *Jews* were groſs and carnal, but becauſe *Moſes* being only the Figure, could only promiſe good things in a Figure, and could not bring them into the inheritance of Children. The chief Prieſts, according to the Law of *Moſes*, entered into the Sanctuary made with hands, which was only a Figure of the true one. They entered there with the blood of He-Goats and Calves, which could not purifie the Conſcience; therefore the Law of *Moſes* could not juſtifie men, it gave them no part in eternal happineſs; therefore *Moſes* was not to promiſe them any ſuch thing; that was the propriety of Jeſus Chriſt, who is entred with his own blood into Heaven, the true Sanctuary, and who hath purchaſed eternal Salvation, as being the onely High-Prieſt of good things to come.

Can you think that the *Jews* were more carnal than the Heathens? Can you imagin that *Moſes* was more groſs than Poets, who make mention of their gods after ſo unworthy a manner? But the Heathens thought of another life. The Poets ſpeak of the *Elizian* Fields, and of Hell, as places deſtined for the recompence of Virtue, and the puniſhment of Vice.

There

There is no Motive more ſtrong, no Idea more terrible, no Recompence more agreeable than that of Eternity; and the moſt barbarous Nations are capable of being ſmitten, ſhaken, and carried on to the exerciſe of Virtue by this thought, that they would be eternally rewarded for it; yet *Moſes* reckons a great number of Bleſſings and Curſings, without mentioning Eternity.

Ariſt. 'Tis becauſe he did not believe there were Spirits; he believed not the Immortality of the Soul.

Theod. This Conſequence is very juſt, and did I not know that the Law of the *Jews*, and their Covenant with God, was a Figvre of the New Covenant, I perhaps might think my ſelf obliged, by the deference I owe to the Books of *Moſes*, to be of the ſentiment of the *Sadducees*; for only this Party appears reaſonable, as I have already ſaid, for I have not yet ſpoken any thing that overthrows it. But as your Friend is a *Carteſian*, he is too much convinced of the Immortality of the Soul, and that *Beings* which think, are diſtinguiſht from matter that cannot think, to draw the ſame Conſequences as you do.

Ariſt. 'Tis true, this muſt convince him.

Theod. Nevertheleſs he was not convicted of it. I could wiſh that the Body were our true happineſs; but is this happineſs capable of recempencing thoſe who fulfil the precept of loving God *with all their heart, with all their ſoul*, and *with all their might?* This might, perhaps, be a ſufficient reward to the *Roman* Virtue; for happineſs muſt be proportionable to its Virtue. But is this worthy of God? Is this ſufficient to make thoſe truly happy, who truly love him? You ſee plainly, *Ariſtarchus*, that they are not. Why then

did *Moſes* enjoin us to love God *with all our might?* And why did he only promiſe us the enjoyments of our Bodies, for the recompence of this love, unleſs it be that the love of God is indiſpenſibly above all things, and that *Moſes* was not to promiſe the happineſs he could not give?

This ſeems to me ſufficient, to convince you, that *Judaiſm* was but the ſhadow and figure of Chriſtianity; that the *Old Covenant* only repreſented the true reconciliation of God with Men; and that the Prieſts, (according to *Aaron*'s Order) the Sacrifices, and Ceremonies of the Law, ought to be abrogated by the Sacrifice of the *Lamb without ſpot, which takes away the ſins of the world*; which worthily ſatisfies the Juſtice of God, which introduces us into the *Holy of Holies*, and promiſes the true happineſs to all thoſe who are members of that Body, whereof he is the Head.

Thus you ſee that I have no deſign to become a *Jew*, unleſs you believe me ſtupid enough to look upon the Body as my proper good; the Body, I ſay, which can't be the happineſs of Brutes, if they have a Soul diſtinct from their Body, and more Noble than it.

But as for you, *Ariſtarchus*, you have now a deſign to turn *Turk*, (I ſpeak to you, as you take upon you the character of your Friend) you are for a Paradiſe, where you would always be indulging your ſelf in ſenſual pleaſure, you would have many Women to ſatisfie thoſe Paſſions which are even here below called brutiſh, and ſhameful *; the great *Mahomet* promiſes them as fair as *new laid Eggs*, and as beautiful as *Oriental Pearls*; they ſhall have black rolling Eyes ——

* Chap. *of Order.* Chap. *of Judgment.* Chap. *of Mercy*, &c.

Ariſt.

Arist. Enough, *Theodorus*, the *Turkish* Religion is certainly unworthy of reasonable Men, it is even unworthy of Beasts, if they have a Soul more Noble than their Body: And I acknowledge that the *Alcoran* destroys itself by its own Principles, as well as *Judaism* does in the Letter. For, *in fine*, 'tis certain that the enjoyments of the Body are not worthy of the Soul: That those who love them, become not thereby more perfect. That those who enjoy them, are thereby often ashamed: And that the promises of *Moses* (not to mention those of *Mahomet*) are unworthy of Mankind; for even the Heathen Philosophers themselves went thus far. *Christ* would have us despise these Goods, altho' the Law promises them; and he declares those to be happy who are deprived of them, and who are miserable and cursed according to the Law.

Thus, I am satisfy'd, that the promises of the Law were only figures; for those amongst the *Jews* who had Charity, could not desire the accomplishment of these promises as their true good, but, perhaps, the Law in it self was good.

Theod. You perceive not that there must be a relation betwixt the good which the Law promises, and the Law itself; and that if the Law justifies really, and by itself, the recompences of the Law must be good in themselves, and make a truly just Man happy: But Men can't be just themselves, and only desire these Rewards. The just then could not trust in the Sacrifices and Ceremonies of the Law, they were to expect the Messiah, that could promise them such a happiness as they might lawfully wish it.

There were two sorts of *Jews* under the Law; *Jews* after the Spirit, and *Jews* after the Letter. Those

who had the Spirit of the Law were Chriſtians, for *Chriſt is the end of the Law*; and thoſe were circumciſed with the circumciſion of the heart, and had put off the old man; explaining the whole Law, its Ceremonies and Promiſes, by their relation to the Meſſiah, and that eternal happineſs which they expected from him.

They were not ſcandaliz'd when *Iſaiah* ſpoke on the behalf of God to the *Jews* according to the fleſh, Iſa. 1. 10, 11. *Hear the word of the Lord, ye Princes of* Sodom; *hearken to the Law of our God, ye People of* Gomorrah. *What have I to do with this multitude of Sacrifices that ye offer to me, ſaith the Lord? All this is an abomination to me, I love not the ſacrifice of your Rams, nor the fat of your Flocks, nor the blood of Beeves, Lambs and He-Goats.*

They ſung with joy in the ſame Spirit with Chriſtians, Pſal. 50. *For thou deſireſt not Sacrifice, elſe would I give it, thou delighteſt not in burnt-offerings.*——*Lord, do good in thy good pleaſure unto* Sion, *build thou the walls of* Jeruſalem, *then ſhalt thou be pleaſed with the ſacrifices of righteouſneſs, with burnt-offerings, and whole burnt-offerings, then ſhall they offer bullocks upon thine Altar.* In fine, they ſighed inceſſantly towards Heaven, to draw down the true Meſſiah, who was to deliver them from their ſins.

But the *Jews* according to the fleſh, gloried in the ſhameful ſignature of the circumciſion of their bodies; they were uncircumciſed in heart, they had a vail which hid the end of the Law from them. They placed their confidence in their Sacrifices and Ceremonies in the Ark, and in the Temple of the Lord; in *Moſes*, *Abraham*, and their other Patriarchs. They were full of Zeal and Fury againſt the true *Iſraelites*, and con-

continually perſecuted the Prophets which had the Spirit of the Law, and which reproved their Vices.

The *Jews* after the Spirit were true Chriſtians, they were always ready to acknowledg and receive Jeſus Chriſt whenever he ſhould come; for the Moral of the New Teſtament is wholly conformable to the diſpoſition of their heart, ſince they acknowledg that the goods of the ſenſes were unworthy of their love. And as they explain'd not holy Scripture according to the Letter, but according to the myſtical Senſe, and with relation to the Meſſiah, whom they expected; ſo the proofs which the Apoſtles took out of the Old Teſtament to juſtifie the quality of *Chriſt*, were entirely conformable to their Spirit.

Thus *Chriſt* and his Apoſtles were heard by thoſe amongſt the *Jews* who were moved by Charity, but the carnal *Jews* who had their heart vail'd, could not, nay, even would not comprehend the proofs which the Apoſtles gave of the Truth they preacht.

Ariſt. But muſt it not be confeſſed, that the proofs which the Apoſtles drew from the Old Teſtament to confirm the New, were very weak?

Theod. They were no proofs, or at beſt extravagant ones to the carnal *Jews*; and thoſe who know not diſtinctly that the Old Teſtament is only for the uſe of the New; that *Abraham*, *Joſeph*, *Joſhua*, *David*, *Solomon*, are only in the Scripture becauſe of *CHRIST*; and that whatever hapned to the *Jews*, were but figures of things to come.

Yes, *Ariſtarchus*, if the literal Senſe of the Scripture is the chief end, then St *Paul* and the Apoſtles prove nothing; nay, they are mad Men, and fanatical. But he muſt be the moſt ſtupid and raſh of all

Men, who can imagin that St *Paul* had not common Senſe; that he would render himſelf ſo very ridiculous to wreſt paſſages of Scripture, to convince the *Jews* how unprofitable their Sacrifices and Ceremonies were.

For, after all, if we can't believe that the Letter of the Law rather adminiſters death than life, after what I have already ſaid; I ſee not, but that we muſt believe at leaſt that there were ſome Men amongſt the *Jews* who ſearch'd into the Law for another Senſe beſides the literal, ſince St *Paul* does not make uſe of the literal Senſe to convince them of the Meſſiah's coming. Do not you know that even the *Jewiſh* Commentators, who are the declared Enemies of *CHRIST*, refer moſt of the paſſages to the Meſſiah, which the Apoſtles do to *CHRIST*; altho' theſe paſſages might often be underſtood of *David*, *Solomon*, or others: for, as the truth is, we muſt conſider theſe perſons as figures of *CHRIST*.

The Letter of the Scripture does, by Divine Providence, contain ſo many things which appear unworthy of God, and even contrary to Reaſon; that thoſe who are not entirely ſtupid, find themſelves obliged to abandon it. I have proved this to you, by the Rewards which *Moſes* propoſed to the *Jews*, which, as you your ſelf have freely granted, are not only unworthy of ſuch who love God above all things, but in general of all other Beings which are more noble than Bodies.

Thus we can't reaſonably doubt, but that the *Jews*, who from the times of the Apoſtles expected the Meſſiah, and who believed him near at hand, were very much diſpoſed to receive him in that capacity which the Apoſtles had deſcribed to them, provided

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the love of ſenſible things hindred them not from following him.

God always diſpoſes things after ſuch a manner, that thoſe who love him, do always find him; he leaves ſuch footſteps after him, that thoſe who feel the inward motions of Charity, do highly acknowledg him. And if falſe Prophets back their Lyes with Miracles, 'tis becauſe God tempts Men, to diſcern thoſe who love him; for thoſe who love him are not deceived.

CHRIST is ſo concealed in the Scriptures, that thoſe who love him not, do not find him there. He is not only come to enlighten the blind, but alſo to blind the wiſe. He is come to reprove the glory of the world, for this is an abomination before God. In fine, he is come to preach the Goſpel to the poor, the ſimple and ignorant; and to paſs by thoſe who content themſelves with their own riches and wiſdom.

There are many obſcurities in the Scripture, but there are alſo many things that are extremely clear; good Men reſt upon what is clear, and pay a deference to what is obſcure, as their reaſon directs them. The pretended wiſe Men and the wicked, who are angry to ſee what they hate, endeavor to obſcure the light by darkneſs; they endeavor to blind their own eyes, and are but too ſucceſsful in their attempt.

If *CHRIST* had come in ſplendor, as he will at his ſecond appearance, if the Prophecies had been ſo evident that it had been impoſſible not to have received them. In fine, if the Chriſtian Religion had been ſuch, as that its truth might have been acknowledged without any application of the mind, and without any love for God, then the negligent and wicked would

have received a grace which they did not deserve. God only gives himself to those who love him; the truth is only discovered to those who seek after it; for if it be just to apply one's self to a Problem to find out its resolution, 'tis necessary that the Sovereign Good, which is the greatest truth, should be such, that it may not be discovered without carefully seeking after it.

Men little esteem that which they acquire without labour, they have but a mean love for that which they have not desired: Thus it was necessary *CHRIST*, whom we have so much need of, should cause himself to be desired and sought after, before he would be found; and 'tis our happiness that he is hid after such a manner that he can't be sought after without being found.

Certainly all the obscurities which are in the Prophecies can't hinder, but that we may evidently observe that the Messiah is come. 'Tis now so many Ages since, that the time prefixt is past over, that there is now no more need of Miracles: For if Miracles were necessary when the Apostles preacht *JESUS CHRIST*, 'tis because the time of the Messiah's coming was not so precisely fixt, but that one might yet expect him.

If in the Life of *CHRIST* are found things which appear something strange; if, for instance, his condemnation to death by the chief Priests, seems unworthy of the Messiah, even these very things should make him to be received, because they were foretold, and being strange, they can only relate to him.

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If all the *Jews* had received *Jesus Christ* when he appeared, perhaps the modern *Jews*, the *Mahometans*, and the *Pagans*, might have had reason to doubt whether he was the true Messiah, they might believe the Scriptures were corrupted; but the *Jews* being always opposed to *Jesus Christ*, are credible Witnesses. And we can't reasonably imagin that the Books which the *Jews* received were corrupted in favor of us.

But if Holy Writ is not corrupted in Essentials, if 'tis certain that it is a Book whose authority was not established by the force of Arms, or doubtful Miracles; if we are sure that the literal Sense is not the chief point of it, then we can't doubt the truth of the Christian Religion, because *CHRIST* is found there all along, even when there was no *Jew*; I would say, when there was no love for sensible good things, and when there was no formal opposition to receive *CHRIST*.

There's nothing, *Aristarchus*, more comfortable to a Man that desires true happiness, who meanly looks upon himself here below as in a strange Land, who continually reflects upon his inward misery, and the War that his domestic Enemies wage against him; there's nothing, I say, more comfortable, nothing more instructive altogether for a Christian, than to read the sacred Books; for all that is written, was written for our instruction, that our hope should be strengthned by the patience and comfort which the Scripture affords us.

Men find themselves in it every where described as they are either under sin or punishment, but God, according to his pure mercy, always remembring the promise which he made to *Abraham*, saves his people, altho'

altho' they deſerve it not; for he hath ſworn it by himſelf: he redeems them out of the bondage of *Pharaoh*, and brings them into the promiſed Land; but does not utterly deſtroy the *Canaanites*, 'til the day that King *Solomon* becomes Maſter of all the Enemies of *Iſrael*. Who is ignorant of the ſignification of theſe things?

I can't particularly explain to you the Prophecies and Figures of the Old Teſtament, for the confirmation of the New. I don't pretend to deprive you of the ſatisfaction of diſcovering them your ſelf; what I ſaid is ſufficient to induce you to read the Scriptures as a devout Chriſtian, and I deſire no more. 'Tis enough that if you read them, you will underſtand ſo much as will be neceſſary to confirm you in the truth of Religion, and to perſuade your Friend, if he is willing to be inſtructed.

I'm certain that *Eraſtus* will be pleaſed to join with you in this Study. I'm ſatisfied that he has a love for Religion, and 'tis high time that he wholly apply himſelf to things which are only capable to make him as happy as he can be in this life. There can be no true happineſs but in the enjoyment of real good: But in this life we can only poſſeſs it through hope. We cannot therefore be happy in this life, but in avoiding every thing that weakens this hope, and in ſeeking after every thing which ſtrengthens it.

Thus thoſe are miſerable that are united to the Body, and by its enjoyments weaken their hope: But *Eraſtus* is happy if he contemns it; and if by the ſtudy of Religion and Chriſtian Morality he encreaſes his hope, ſo that future happineſs appears to him as if it were preſent; and a foretaſte of eternal good things is more agreeable to him, than the reliſh of momentary pleaſures.

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DIALOGUE VII.

That Chriſtian Morality is very uſeful to the Perfection of the Underſtanding.

Ariſt. I Waited for you, *Theodorus*, to give you an account of my Joy; for I have, at laſt, found a means to make my Friend hear me. I no longer ſpeak to his Ears, I, as it were, ſpeak now to his Heart. I have made him underſtand moſt of the things whereof we have diſcourſed, and he ſeems to be very well ſatisfied about them.

I muſt tell you how things paſſed betwixt us. I had been ſo offended at his Stupidity and Brutiſhneſs when I met him laſt, that as I went home, I often repeated to my ſelf the words of Chriſt, *Mat. 7. 6. Do not caſt your Pearls before Swine*, &c. This did comfort me with a Conſolation ſomewhat ſenſible, Indignation and Revenge having ſome ſhare in it; for I muſt confeſs that I was ſomewhat angry, and already began to be concerned for having loved ſo much a perſon who ſeemed to be out of his ſenſes. Having therefore very much reflected on that ſaying of our Saviour, I no ſooner ſaw my Friend again, but it was preſent to my mind; and I do not know how I came

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to perſuade my ſelf that I ſhould be guilty of want of reſpect towards the words of the Goſpel, ſhould I ſpeak any more to him about the Truths of Religion, ſo that I ſtood before him without ſaying any thing. But if my mind did not expreſs itſelf by the ſound of my voice, my heart ſpoke ſufficiently by the air of my face; and my Friend might well imagin that I was not come to ſee him ſo early, merely to bid him good morrow.

On the other ſide, he being in the main a Man of a civil and mild diſpoſition, I cannot doubt but that he repented himſelf of the Anſwers he had made me, and had pondered on thoſe things which I had told him, with a ſtrength and plainneſs ſufficient, as I thought, to convince him, if he had any ways reflected. Withal ſeeing me ſo early come to ſee him, after the many expreſſions he had uſed, which ought to have made me decline his Society for a long time, being of the temper that I have mentioned, he could not help being moved by my zeal, and ſorry for his want of attention.

In ſhort, whether he was ſhaken by my former Reaſons, or touched by ſome ſentiments of Friendſhip and Gratitude, he began, after he had been ſome moments ſilent, with an acknowledgment of his fault and of his ſorrow. After this, he prayed me to repeat once more the proofs that I had offered to him of the Chriſtian Religion, aſſuring me that he had thought on them ſeriouſly, and that he had found much ſolidity and light in them, how imperfectly ſoever he remembred them. I at firſt was ſomewhat unwilling to comply with his deſire, ſtill remembring the words of Chriſt; but ſeeing him perſiſt in his demand with heat and eagerneſs, I believed that he was diſpoſed to

hear

near me: Accordingly I gave him the ſatisfaction he deſired, and he hath received, without difficulty, the ſame things that he had rejected with ſcorn.

Theod. You ſee even by this, *Ariſtarchus*, that it was convenient that Chriſt ſhould cauſe himſelf to be expected during many Centuries, and hide himſelf in the Scriptures for thoſe who do not care to find him.

We eaſily receive what we deſire, and find with pleaſure what we ſeek with paſſion. Your Friend could not ſee two days ago that Truth which you propoſed to him, becauſe he did not ſeek it: but he hath diſcovered it, becauſe he deſired it; and hath found it with pleaſure, if he hath ſought it with eagerneſs.

If Men do not know God, 'tis becauſe they do not care to know him; and if they do not ſee the truth of the Chriſtian Religion, 'tis becauſe the love of ſenſible things prepoſſeſſes them, and makes them hate a Religion that deſtroys it.

All our Paſſions juſtifie themſelves, and ſpeak inceſſantly for their conſervation; and thoſe that hearken to the dictates of their Paſſions, find themſelves ſo ſtrongly moved with compaſſion towards them, that for their ſakes they deſpiſe the Laws which condemn thoſe Criminals to death. For indeed nothing is more deſpicable than the Chriſtian Religion, if we believe our Paſſions, The Goſpel hath nothing that appears pleaſing, it preaches nothing to us but ſelf-denial; and Chriſt doth by the example of his life and death, condemn the conduct of thoſe who fix their minds on ſenſible things.

Thoſe therefore who eſteem nothing beſides the objects of their Senſes, who blindly follow the motions

tions of their Paſſions, voluptuous Men; or, to uſe the words of Chriſt, *Swine* are uncapable of underſtanding the truth of Religion, and enjoying true happineſs. The Kingdom of God is a *Pearl*, for which they will not ſell all what they poſſeſs; they do not know the value of it.

Therefore Chriſt will not have us to propoſe future happineſs to thoſe Wretches, nor explain ſacred Myſteries to them, they being uncapable and unworthy of them. We are only to threaten them in the Name of God, and make them afraid by the Idea of Eternity, or even by the fear of temporal Ills. But when they grow penitent, deprive themſelves of worldly pleaſures, and ceaſe to be Swine, it is neceſſary we ſhould explain to them the Myſteries of Religion, and the Secrets of the Goſpel; for being then become Sheep they hear, and can diſcern the voice of the true Paſtor of their Souls.

For this Reaſon, and ſeveral others, which you will perhaps underſtand by the Sequel of our Diſcourſes, I did not much approve of the deſign you had to relate all things to your Friend; I was afraid for you, and had no hopes of him: But God, who diſpoſes of our hearts, hath rewarded your Charity and Zeal, and you ought to return your thanks to him for't.

We have hitherto diſcourſed of the Proofs that concern the Truth of Religion; and I believe that what I have ſaid, is ſufficient to perſuade reaſonable perſons, that there is no other Religion in the world beſides the Chriſtian, able to re-eſtabliſh the Order which Sin hath reverſed; that none beſides God-man could ſatisfie God's Juſtice, reconcile us, and give us an acceſs to him, and in a word, pay to God a worſhip worthy of him.

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It is time to ſhew you that Chriſtian Morality is perfectly conformable to Reaſon, and that in the ſtate to which Sin hath reduced us, nothing more uſeful to re-eſtabliſh the order of things can be preſcribed, than the precepts and counſels of Chriſt concerning Prayer, and the privation of ſenſible things; for I ſuppoſe no others.

I entreat you to obſerve carefully whatever we ſhall ſpeak of hereafter; for you ought rather to inſtruct your Friend in thoſe things which reſpect the government of our manners, than in ſuch ſpeculative truths as are above the capacity of a carnal and ſenſible Man.

I will put ſome Queſtions to *Eraſtus*, for I have not ſaid any thing to him this good while.

Do you remember, *Eraſtus*, what we have ſaid concerning the End and Order which God propoſed to himſelf when he created Man, and are you convinced of it?

Eraſt. I remember it, and am convinced of it. I believe that God acts for none but himſelf: that when he makes a Spirit, it is that this Spirit may know him; and that when he makes a Will, it is that this Will may love him.

This Order ſeems to me ſo neceſſary, that I do not believe that God preſerves any Spirit, but what in ſome manner knows and loves him. I believe that the Union which Spirits have with God by their knowledg and love, cannot altogether be diſſolved without annihilating them.

For what kind of being were that Spirit that ſhould know and love nothing? But all Spirit that knows and loves, knows and loves only by the means of the Union which he hath with God; ſince he is not to himſelf

himſelf his light, and that the motion which he hath towards good in general, and which makes him capable of loving private good, doth not proceed from himſelf, nor from any thing below him.

Theod. That's true, *Eraſtus*, all Spirits are eſſentially united to God, nor can they be entirely ſeparated from him without ceaſing to be. But what ought to be their Union with God, that they may be as happy and perfect as it is poſſible for them to be?

Eraſt. It is plain that this Union ought to be the narroweſt that can be, for none but God is the ſovereign good of Spirits.

Theod. Thus, *Eraſtus*, we become more perfect the greater and the ſtronger the Union, which we have with God, is. The damned have but juſt ſo much Union with God, as is neceſſary to keep them in being: But the bleſſed are united to God in ſo perfect a manner, that they do not only receive from him a being, but alſo its perfection. Let us ſee therefore, *Eraſtus*, wherein conſiſts this kind of Union with God, whereby we receive all the perfection whereof we are capable in this life?

Eraſt. I have learn'd in the Conferences which I have had with you, and by the peruſal of the Book *of the Inquiry after Truth*, that God alone is the true cauſe and true mover as well of Bodies as of Spirits, and that natural cauſes are only occaſional cauſes which determin the true cauſe to act in conſequence of his eternal Will.

Chap. 8. of the laſt Book.

I am perſuaded that I can be united to the Bodies that are about me, and to that which I animate and move, only becauſe I am united to God; for all Bodies cannot by

Dialog. 1.

by themſelves act in my Soul, not make themſelves viſible to her, as ſhe likewiſe hath not by herſelf the ſtrength to move any Body, ſince ſhe doth not even know what muſt be done to ſtir an Arm. Thus, *Theodorus*, if I ſpeak to you, and underſtand you; if my Spirit unites itſelf to yours, or my Body to your Body, God alone is the true cauſe of it, he is the Bond of all the Unions which I am able to have with all his Works. I can be immediately united to none but him, ſince none but he can immediately act in me, and I only act through his means.

But, *Theodorus*, I may be united to God, and fix my ſelf to him, and in that have no relation to any other but him; and I may alſo be united to God, with relation to ſome other thing but God: For when I think on abſtracted Idea's of things, I am united to God by my thought, ſince *I* ſee thoſe things only through the means of the Union that *I* have with God. * But this Union doth not bind me to Creatures. On the other ſide, when *I* feel ſenſible good, it is only by the Union that *I* have with God, and becauſe he acts in me: * For all Bodies are inſenſible by themſelves; but this ſecond Union which *I* have with God, faſtens me to ſenſible things, for God unites among themſelves all his Works, and he alone can be the Bond of all Unions.

* *Dial.* 3.

* *Dial.* 2.

I therefore believe, that our Union with God upholds our Being, and that we ſhould not exiſt without it. But *I* am perſuaded, that the Union which faſtens us to none but God, and hath relation to none but him, is that which gives the utmoſt perfection of which we are capable.

Theod. Do you not remember, *Eraſtus*, that the Author of the Book *of the Inquiry after Truth*, demonſtrates, That our Senſes never repreſent things to us as they are in themſelves, but only according to their relation to our ſelves; and that therefore all ſenſible knowledg is uſeful for the preſervation and conveniency of our life, but altogether unprofitable for the perfection of the Mind, and the knowledg of Truth?

Eraſt. I do remember it, *Theodorus*, and ſhall never forget it; for it was that which perſuaded me, that of all our Knowledg and Notions, none but thoſe that are purely intellectual make us more perfect; and, indeed, we can be ſaid to ſee in God things as they are only through thoſe ſorts of Notions.

When we have a ſentiment of things, we do not ſee them in themſelves, we have no knowledg of them, and even in reality they are not the ſenſible Objects that we do feel, but our very ſelves; for our Senſations belong to us, and not to thoſe Objects to which we generally uſe to attribute them. How then could our Senſes lead us to the knowledg of Truth, ſince we do not know Truth, but when we ſee things ſuch as they are?

Theod. If you remember alſo what that Book ſaith of the Errors of our Imagination and Paſſions, you ought to grant that not only the Imagination and Senſes hinder us from diſcovering Truth, but alſo that our Paſſions carry and remove us from the true Good. In a word, that all the thoughts and motions of the Soul, that excite themſelves in us, by reaſon of ſome changes that happen in our Body, diſunite us from God, to unite us to Bodies. For, after all, it is neceſſary that the Soul, who ought to mind the preſervation of her

Body,

Body, be warn'd to think on it when ſome new Accident happens to it.

Eraſt. *I* grant all theſe things.

Theod. Let us ſuppoſe then that there never happens any change in the Brain, but that the Soul receives ſome thought which takes it off from the light of truth, and the love of true good, and diſunites her from God, to unite her to Bodies. If it is certain that the perfection of the mind conſiſts in the knowledg of truth, and in the love of true good, in one word, in an Union with God which hath relation to none but him, *I* ask you: In the ſtate which we are in, wherein we cannot hinder the communication of motion, nor the bodies that are about us from penetrating and agitating ours; what are we to do, to tend continually towards our perfection? do not conſult the Goſpel now, conſult only your reaſon.

Eraſt. It is plain that we ought by flight to avoid being acted by thoſe Bodies that are about us, that we ought to mortify our Senſes, and keep ſhut as much as we can all the paſſages at which ſenſible Objects come in, and diſturb our Reaſon.

When we cannot ſtay the motion of thoſe Bodies that are capable of offending us, we never fail to ſtep aſide to avoid being ſtruck by them: Thus, when we are not able to ſtop the action of ſenſible Objects, we ought to avoid them by flight; in the ſame manner as we uſe to preſerve our ſelves from contagious diſtempers by change of Air.

Let an Inſect but prick us, we immediately loſe ſight of the moſt ſolid truths; let a Fly but buz in our Ears, and our mind will be preſently fill'd with darkneſs. What ſhall we do then to hold this truth which ſtill gets away, and preſerve this light which va-

niſhes from us? Muſt we kill all the Inſects, and drive away all the Flyes? this can never be. We muſt then remove ſomewhere elſe; for, after all, it is impoſſible that the Senſations that divide your thinking Faculty, ſhould not hinder us from diſcovering Truth.

Theod. You begin perhaps, *Ariſtarchus*, to diſcover by what we have ſaid, and by this laſt Anſwer of *Eraſtus*, that what Chriſt hath preached about the mortification of our Senſes, is the beſt method that can be to reunite us to God by the knowledg of Truth.

Ariſt. It is true: But I am afraid that you attribute to the Doctrin of the Goſpel ſome perfection that Chriſt never deſigned to give it. For, in all likelihood, Chriſt never intended to give us any Precepts to direct our minds in the inquiry of certain Truths, which are not abſolutely neceſſary to us in the World.

Theod. I own, *Ariſtarchus*, that Chriſt's principal deſign was not to inſtruct us in certain ſpeculative Truths, which do not by themſelves conduce to the knowledg and love of ſovereign Truth. But the Precepts of the Goſpel are ſo uſeful, that they extend to all the things that may in ſome manner add to the perfection of the mind; for they are directly oppoſed to the cauſe of our diſorders, and remedy our diſeaſes in their beginning. And thus they tend to give us all the perfection whereof we are capable, ſince to deprive our ſelves of ſenſible things, is not only a neceſſary thing to help the converſion of our hearts, but alſo for the perfecting our underſtandings, as you will ſee it better hereafter.

Do you think, *Eraſtus*, that nothing beſides actual Sentiments can hinder the mind from applying itſelf to

to Truth, and that a Man who hath for ſome years enjoyed the pleaſures of the World is able, when he leaves them, to unite himſelf to intellectual things, with as much force and light, as thoſe who have during all their Lives been careful to purifie their Imaginations?

Eraſt. No, certainly, none can enjoy worldly pleaſure with impunity. When the Imagination hath been touch'd by ſome ſenſible thing, the impreſſion of it remains; and the enjoyment of worldly pleaſures makes it eaſily Slaves to them. There remains in our Brain ſome impreſſions that always repreſent to the mind the pleaſures that it hath enjoy'd, and that often hinder it from applying itſelf to ſuch things as have no ſenſible attraction.

Therefore when the Imagination is ſully'd, the Mind is fill'd with darkneſs, becauſe Concupiſcence, which of itſelf takes off the Mind from the ſight of Truth, is ſtrengthned and encreas'd by this new Concupiſcence that is acquir'd by the uſe of ſenſible things.

Theod. What muſt we do then, *Eraſtus*, to become capable of attaining that perfection of underſtanding which conſiſts in the knowledg of Truth?

Eraſt. It appears plainly, that we muſt with all imaginable care avoid whatever is able to make any deep impreſſion in our Brain; we muſt (give me leave to uſe your expreſſion) ſtrictly take care to purify our Imaginations.

Ariſt. But then, *Theodorus*, we ought not to do Penance; for painful Senſations as much divide our thinking Faculty as thoſe that are pleaſing.

Theod. A Man ought not to mortify himſelf with an intent to find the Solution of a Problem, ſuch an

Action doth not enlighten the Mind. None can actually feel Pain, and see Truth actually at the same time. But Sufferings, how unuseful soever for the knowledg of certain Truths, are very useful to take us off from sensible things; * to satisfy God's Justice, being join'd to those of our Saviour; to merit us the sight of that sovereign Truth which dissipates all our darkness; and even to teach us some certain moral Truths, on which we do not think when we feel nothing.

* *Pontificia loquitur.*

But, *Aristarchus*, do you not see that the impressions of Sufferings that remain in the Memory, do not darken it, like the impressions of Pleasures? Do you not see that they never provoke Lust, never disturb the Mind, never divide its Attention, and that things being thus, they do not hinder it from discovering Truth? We easily cease to think on Pain, as soon as we cease to suffer it, and have no cause to fear it, because Pain hath nothing that is pleasing in itself. But the same doth not happen when ever we have tasted of any Pleasures, their *vestiges* or impressions remain strongly printed in our Brains, and do each moment excite some troublesom desires that disturb the peace of the mind; and those desires renewing those impressions, Concupiscence, which is the Spring of all our Ills, and consequently of the want of application of the mind to Truth, as well as the corruption of the heart, incessantly receives new strength.

Arist. You are in the right: But yet we see that many learned Men have spent their whole Lives in Debauchery, abandoning themselves continually to all sorts of Pleasures.

Theod. Not so many as you may think, *Aristarchus*, for the number of the false learned is very great. A Man

Man muſt ſee Truth clearly and diſtinctly, to be truly learned. It is not enough to have read much; for the Mind knows nothing, if it ſees nothing. Pleaſure, unleſs it be exceſſive, doth not hinder a Man from reading, none but violent Pleaſures darken the memory and imagination, but the leaſt thing in the World can darken the ſight of the Mind. The Learned of whom you were ſpeaking, make more uſe of their memory, and of their imagination, than they do of their underſtanding; and I every day perceive that thoſe whom you eſteem moſt for their Learning are a ſort of Men whoſe underſtanding is ſo ſmall, ſo dark, ſo diſſipated, that they are not capable of having the leaſt apprehenſion of many Truths which *Eraſtus* very eaſily comprehends.

There is much difference between that Learning which depends upon the largeneſs of the Memory, and the force of the Imagination; and that Learning which conſiſts in a ſight purely intellectual, wherein the Imagination hath no ſhare, unleſs it be indirectly.

All pure Idea's vaniſh, and diſſipate themſelves at the appearance of ſenſible Idea's. We do not hear the voice of Truth, when our Senſes and our Imagination ſpeak to us; for we had much rather confuſedly know the relations that things have with us, than clearly to know what relations they have between themſelves. We are in ſo great a dependance under Bodies, and ſo little united to God, that the leaſt thing ſeparates us from him.

But ſenſible knowledg, and the ſight of the imagination being ſtrengthned by the *veſtiges* or impreſſions of the Brain, may withſtand contrary Sentiments; the Idea's of that knowledg have, if I may

uſe that expreſſion, a Body, and cannot be ſo eaſily diſſipated. Thus Retirement, and a privation from all Pleaſure, is not abſolutely neceſſary to gain all the knowledg wherein we make a greater uſe of the Senſes and Imagination, than of Reaſon.

If Mr. *Des Cartes* came to be ſo learned in *Geometry*, *Phyſics*, and other parts of *Philoſophy*, it is, becauſe he paſs'd 25 years in a Retirement; it is becauſe he hath perfectly diſcover'd the errors of our Senſes, that he hath with care avoided their impreſſion, and oftner meditated than read. In a word, it is becauſe being held by few things, he could unite himſelf to God, in a manner cloſe enough to receive from him all the neceſſary lights. This made him extremely learned.

Had he ſtill diſengag'd himſelf more from his Senſes, leſs immers'd himſelf in the World, and yet more carefully apply'd himſelf to ſeek after Truth, it is certain that he would have carried the Sciences of which he hath treated much further, and his *Metaphyſics* would not be ſuch as he hath left them to us in his Writings.

Ariſt. But, *Theodorus*, now that ſo many able Men have wrote of *Philoſophy*, *Mathematics*, and other Learning, methinks it is enough if we read their Works. Thoſe learned Perſons whereof I was juſt now ſpeaking to you, know *Des Cartes* as well as *Des Cartes* could know himſelf. My Friend whom I have a mind to convert, underſtands him ſo throughly, that nothing can be mention'd out of that Author but is known by him; nay, and the very place where it lies; yet he never meditates, reads a Book in three days, and knows it all. Therefore I judg that Retirement is not neceſſary for Learning.

Theod.

Theod. Not for that Learning which reſides in Memory, and doth not enlighten the Mind. Do you think that thoſe Perſons who ſo eaſily remember other Mens Opinions, can ſee the truth of them? Do you think that your Friend knows *Des Cartes*, or rather do you think that he ſees what *Des Cartes* ſaw? If you do, you are much miſtaken. I will grant to you, that your Friend knows all the words which *Des Cartes* hath us'd, better than *Des Cartes* himſelf did; or that he can better relate *Des Cartes*'s Opinion, than *Des Cartes* himſelf could have done it. In ſhort, I will believe, if you will, that he is fitter to make a Man a *Carteſian*, to enlighten the minds of thoſe that hear him, and make them receive *Des Cartes*'s Sentiments, than *Des Cartes* himſelf was: yet, for all this, I do not believe that he truly knows *Des Cartes*.

Des Cartes's *Philoſophy* is in his memory and imagination, and for that Reaſon he ſpeaks pertinently of it: but I do not believe that it is in his mind, and for that Reaſon he neither ſees nor approves thoſe Sentiments that are the neceſſary Conſequences of it.

It ſeems as a Paradox, that a Man who doth not know a Truth, ſhould ſometimes be more capable of perſuading another of it, than he who exactly knows it, and diſcover'd it himſelf; yet if you conſider that we inſtruct others only by Words, you will eaſily perceive that thoſe that have any force of imagination, and a happy memory, often can, remembring what they have read, explain themſelves more clearly, than thoſe who are accuſtom'd to meditation, and who diſcover Truth by themſelves.

Thus, *Ariſtarchus*, do not imagin that thoſe who ſpeak pertinently to you concerning ſome certain Truths, ſee them perfectly, for it is not always ſo: many

many times this happens, yet those Truths are only in their memory, or else they see them by an imaginary sight, for that sight furnishes expressions lively, and that seem to signify much, tho' they signify nothing distinct, only to those whom they move to retire within themselves.

There is much difference between seeing and seeing; between seeing after having read, and seeing after having meditated: And to find out those that see distinctly and perfectly possess a Truth, from those who do not possess it, there needs truly to propose to them some question that depends from it; for then those that see clearly speak clearly, but the others always speak in such a manner as discovers their want of light.

Examin your learned Men, *Aristarchus*, according to this method, and you will find that the most learned are the most ignorant; that they have the less penetration, and the greatest rashness; that they cannot so much as discern Truth from what seems to be such; that they speak without conceiving what they say; and that often in the very instant that you admire them, what is most to be admired in them, is nothing but an effect of that memory which, like a Watch, goes of itself, and whose springs unbend themselves by the action of the imagination.

In short, you will see after all, that almost all their knowledg is destitute of light and evidence, of that intellectual light and evidence that is darkned by the slightest sensation, and dissipated by the smallest motion; and that therefore Retirement, a privation of sensible things, the mortification of the senses and passions are absolutely necessary for the perfection of the understanding, as also for the conversion of the heart.

But

But this doth not juſtify the Morals of the Goſpel, for Chriſt did not come to teach us the *Mathematics*, *Philoſophy*, and ſuch other Truths, which by themſelves are unuſeful enough for our Salvation.

All knowledg of Truth rendring the mind in ſome manner more perfect, it was neceſſary that Chriſt's directions ſhould be proper to purchaſe it. But the true perfection of the mind, and the ſhorteſt way to learn generally all Sciences, being an Union with God (not the natural Union, which is inceſſantly interrupted by the motions of Concupiſcence, but the Union which a clear ſight, and a continual love make indiſſolvable,) It was neceſſary that Chriſt's Precepts ſhould put us in the way, whereby we may attain to that Union.

You will ſee at our next Interview, that the Chriſtian Religion alone can lead us to it. In the mean time I leave you with *Eraſtus*, to meditate on the things which we have ſaid now.

DIA-

DIALOGUE VIII.

That Christian Morality is absolutely necessary for the Conversion of the Heart.

Theod. WEll, *Aristarchus*, are you convinc'd that Retirement from Business, a Privation of Pleasures; in a word, that a mortification of the Senses and Passions, is absolutely necessary for the discovery of secret, abstracted, and sound Truths, whose knowledg puffs not up the Heart? For I well know, that the Commerce of the World engages the Mind in the Study of such Sciences as render a Man famous, and that Concupiscence gives us a Passion for all Truths which are useful to make a Man considerable in the World.

Arist. Yes, *Theodorus*, I am convinc'd. Truth in itself appears so mean a thing to Men tos'd with Passion, or join'd to some sensible Object, that they can't but despise it; and tho' there are many that seek after it, 'tis, I confess, out of design, and hope to draw some advantage from it. The brightness and glory which environs the Learned, sparkles and dazles us, our secret Pride

Pride awakes and ſtirs us up: But the pure light of Truth is not lively enough to make us perceive it, when we are preingaged with other things.

Eraſt. I have known ſome Men, who probably read in the Morning, for a matter of Talk in the Afternoon; for as ſoon as they had left the little Company that applauded them, they have had ſuch an horror for Books, and every thing call'd Learning, that they cou'd not abide to hear it ſpoke of. You remember Mr. *F.* for three years, he doubtleſs took great pleaſure to teach three or four of us young Men who came to hear him, ſince he wou'd fatigue himſelf every Morning, to repeat the miſerable Reaſons which he plunder'd out of *Ariſtotle*'s Problems. Now he reads no more; for we hearing him no longer with admiration, he ſpeaks no more with pleaſure. He even has much averſion for all Diſcourſes of Learning; and as he is a little troubleſom, we have found out the ſecret to get rid of his Company, by propoſing ſome Queſtion to him to have it reſolv'd.

Theod. This Example, *Eraſtus*, was not needful to convince us that Perſons who are wedded to ſome ſenſible thing, do not ſearch after Truth for its ſake. You ſee that we are well enough convinc'd of it. You may obſerve the weakneſs of other Men, and how their Vanity renders 'em miſerable, provided that you ſuppoſe your ſelf in their perſon, for we are all very near one as the other. But, *Eraſtus*, we never ought to inſpire into any one a Contempt of, or Eſtrangement from a Perſon, unleſs we are certain, I ſay certain, that he is dangerous and contagious. Otherwiſe we muſt ſpeak in general terms. You would, perhaps, by your judicious Reflection, give us to underſtand that you are witty; we already know it,

but

but we knew not that you would have it known. 'Tis a hard thing to accuſe others of Vanity, without condemning one's ſelf of the ſame thing, or ſomething elſe equivalent. Thus, *Eraſtus*, you may conſtantly obſerve, continually criticize, but think and correct your ſelf, and if you would not condemn your ſelf, hold your peace.

You freely grant, *Ariſtarchus*, that the Councels of *JESUS CHRIST* are neceſſary to acquire that perfection of the Mind which conſiſts in the knowledg of Truth. Nevertheleſs *JESUS CHRIST* came not to make us Philoſophers, his Councels, as I told you yeſterday, tend only indirectly, and by reaſon of their univerſality to make us wiſe. But if he gave not to his Diſciples many Precepts of Logic to reaſon juſtly, yet he taught them all neceſſary Rules to live well, and gave them alſo all neceſſary power to follow them. 'Tis for this end that *JESUS CHRIST* is come, his deſign is to remedy the diſorder of Sin, to reunite us to God, by ſeparating us from the Body, to ſave us, and raiſe us up to himſelf in Heaven.

We ſhall eternally remain ſuch, as we ſhall be in the moment that our Soul ſhall leave our Body. If we love God in this moment, we ſhall love him always; for the motion of Spirits is only unconſtant, and meritorious for this life: But all human Sciences are in themſelves unprofitable, to regulate this moment, upon which depends our Eternity; they merit us not the Aſſiſtances of Heaven for this moment, they incline not our hearts towards God. Thus *JESUS CHRIST* was not to guide us directly to this perfection of the Mind which is barren for Eternity, and which ceaſes at the moment of Death; he was to recommend to us a privation from ſenſible Good, to the end

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that our hearts may be fill'd with his love, being empty of every thing elſe; and to the end that adhering to nothing in the moment that commences Eternity, our love may carry us towards God who is the ſource of all happineſs.

Let us not then any more conſider the Councels of *JESUS CHRIST*, with reſpect to the knowledg of Truth, but with reſpect to this perfection of Mind, which conſiſts in the love of real Good, in Charity which remains for ever, which alone merits Eternity, and without which all Virtues are but imaginary.

Let us examin the Morality of the Goſpel with relation to the Rule of Manners, but let us examin it with all poſſible ſtrictneſs, that there may be no Subject for a ſecond Enquiry; let us not be convinc'd leſs of our Duties by Reaſon, than we are by Faith.

Certainly if the things which I have prov'd concerning *JESUS CHRIST* in the preceding Conferences are true, there remains no doubt about the truths of Morality; we muſt renounce our own Wills, we muſt bear his Croſs, we muſt weep, faſt and ſuffer. *JESUS CHRIST* hath ſaid it. If he is God, if he is Wiſe, 'tis evident that his Councels are very advantageous to us. But becauſe we can't be too much convinc'd of the truth of theſe Propoſitions, which are ſo incommodious, and which offend us ſo ſenſibly, we muſt endeavor to diſcover by our own Reaſon that there is no other remedy for our Evils.

Perhaps we ſhall do like thoſe that are dangerouſly hurt, who, to preſerve a miſerable life, preſent their own Bodies to the Surgeons to be cut and burnt; they believe theſe Men upon their word, and confide in their Operations, and expoſe themſelves to a great pain, in an uncertain proſpect of a Good which in itſelf

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is very inconsiderable: What then should hinder us from imitating them, when the evidence of Reason concurs with the certainty of Faith? If we refuse to believe in *JESUS CHRIST*, if we fear not Eternity, if we hearken to our Senses and Passions, yet it may be, that Reason join'd to Faith, will effect our Conviction: And it may be that, by continually condemning our laziness, it will excite in us a profitable Inquietude. Let us therefore examin those things in their Principle.

We ought only to love what is lovely. No Thing is lovely but what is good; but no Thing is good with respect to us, if it be uncapable of doing us good, if it be uncapable of rendring us more perfect and happy (for I speak not here of a kind of Good which consists in the perfection of every thing.) Now no Thing is capable of rendring us more perfect and happy, if it be not above us, and capable of acting in us. But all Bodies are below us, they can't act in us, they can't produce in us either pleasure or light, then they are not to be belov'd: What think you *Eraſtus*?

Eraſt. When I ask my Reason, I freely rest upon this; but when I make use of my Senses, I doubt it: Yet as my Reason answers me more distinctly than my Senses, as it is preferable to my Senses, and as it never deceives me, tho' my Senses always do, when I make use of them to judge of Truth; I believe that sensible Objects are uncapable of rendring me more perfect and happy.

Theod. Then you ought not to love Bodies?

Eraſt. 'Tis true, this is evident.

Theod. But don't you love them?

Eraſt. Much, *Theodorus*, I follow not my Reason; I follow my Senses, my Pleasure.

Theod.

Theod. Thus *Eraſtus*. To love ſenſible things, it's ſufficient to taſte Pleaſure in the uſe of 'em; Pleaſure captivates the Heart, it acts more powerfully upon you than your reaſon, ſince you love becauſe of pleaſure ſuch things as you know by reaſon are unworthy of your Love.

Eraſt. I have for a long time known what you now tell me.

Theod. I don't doubt it, 'tis not to teach you what I now tell you, but to make you think of it; But pray tell me do you love the Game of *Piquet* or *Omber*.

Eraſt, Very much.

Theod. Do you love Hunting?

Eraſt. I have not yet been at it, but I imagine that there's no great pleaſure to courſe a Hare for three or four hours together, in the Wind, Rain or Sun.

Ariſt. You know not what you ſay, *Eraſtus*, theres no greater pleaſure in the World.

Theod. Take heed *Eraſtus*, *Ariſtarchus* judges not of Hunting as you do, he loves it, and you love it not. But would you love it? Does your Reaſon repreſent it as if it were worthy of your love?

Eraſt. No, *Theodorus*, neither my Reaſon nor my Senſes; for what pleaſure can it be to purſue a miſerable Beaſt a whole day together; I pity the Paſſion of *Ariſtarchus*.

Theod. I adviſe you then never to go to it; for if you did, you perhaps would come back more paſſionate than *Ariſtarchus*, he was once as you are, without any deſire to hunt before he had taſted the pleaſure, it may be he had even an averſion for it, but by little and little he was ſo accuſtomed to it, that he could not refrain from it.

Eraſt. I believe it, and will never go, for I would not be ruined in Horſes and Dogs.

Theod. But, *Eraſtus*, why play you? Why do you loſe your time unprofitably? Will you ruine your ſelf by play rather than Hunting?

Eraſt. I can't help it.

Theod. Then 'tis with you as with *Ariſtarchus*, you condemn one another, and have compaſſion for one another.

Ariſt. 'Tis true *Eraſtus*; and I are not over wiſe, thus to follow the Motions of our Paſſions, altho I ſee well that he runs the Riſque of loſing at Cards, and I, of falling off my Horſe.

Theod. What ſhould have been done then to reclaim *Eraſtus* from gaming, and *Ariſtarchus* from hunting? For as things now are, there only remains in human apprehenſion a violent Remedy.

Eraſt. When *Ariſtarchus* perceived himſelf, agitated by the pleaſure of the Chace, he ſhould have forthwith left it; He ſhould reſemble me, his Imagination ſhould not be filled with theſe Veſtiges, which continually renew the object of his Paſſion; 'tis the Pleaſure that is found in the uſe of ſenſible things which is the Cauſe of Paſſions, and which agitates the animal Spirits; but when the animal Spirits are ſtrongly agitated, they impreſs deep Veſtiges in the Brain, they even break, thro' their violent Courſe, all the Fibres which reſiſt them: Thus as ſoon as we taſte pleaſure we muſt examine and ſee if it be advantageous that the Veſtiges of the Object which cauſe this pleaſure perfect their form; if the Object which cauſes this pleaſure is unworthy of our Application and Love, we muſt deprive our ſelves of it, and alſo ſhun the pleaſure which enſlaves us by the Veſtiges it impreſſes

impreſſes in our Brain. 'Tis this I believe which we ought to do to hinder our Concupiſcence from a continual growth.

Theod.—But *Eraſtus*, when you actually taſte of pleaſure, can you eaſily quit the Object that cauſes it? When *Ariſtarchus* was in the heat of the Chaſe, the firſt time he went thither, do you think he was in a Condition to reflect upon himſelf? Did not the Sound of the Horn, the Noiſe and running of the Dogs, the motion of the Horſe, and above all this the pleaſure that he found in all theſe different motions, take up his mind? Did not his Paſſion carry him as well as his Horſe, to the Death of the Hare or Stag? And do you believe that he could then think of your Remedy? Or if he had thought, do you believe that he would have been willing to have made uſe of it? Or that he could have reſiſted the Paſſion which agitated him? The Philoſophical Remedies which you have laid down, are not proper at ſuch a time, *Eraſtus*, to hinder our Concupiſcence that it ſhould not encreaſe.

Eraſt. 'Tis true *Theodorus*, the moſt certain of all Remedies is that of privation. Pleaſure poyſons us, we muſt not taſte it, this the moſt ſhort and ſure Rule (b) *He that commits Sin becomes the Slave of it.* I find that reaſon perfectly agrees with the Joh. 8. 34 Goſpel, nevertheleſs I remember that I have cured my Imagination and reſiſted my Paſſion by the uſe of things, which, according to what you have ſaid, ſhould encreaſe it. Thus,

About three or four years ago, I freely believed every thing that I heard: One day there came an Officer hither who ſaid, that travelling with an *Engliſhman*, that could not forbear ſmoking, it hapned that this *Engliſhmans* Horſe fell down, and broke his Maſters

Leg, who being upon the ground, and thinking rather on his Pipe than Leg, he put his hand into his Pocket, and taking out his Pipe whole, he cry'd out with Joy, *Well, well, my Pipe is not broke.* This Relation ſtruck me, and I imagin'd the ſmoke of Tobacco was the moſt agreeable thing in the World, ſo that I perceiv'd my ſelf urg'd with a violent Paſſion to try it; but it happen'd to me as to many others, that I had no ſooner taſted it, but had a horror for it. Thus, *Theodorus*, your Remedy, which is to deprive us of ſenſible things, is not general; for the uſe of Tobacco has cured me of the Paſſion I had for it, and when I had not us'd it, I was deſirous of it.

Theod. But, *Eraſtus*, don't you ſee that we muſt be depriv'd of all that is capable of ſullying the Imagination? The Commerce we have with thoſe who ſpeak of Bodies as true Goods, is capable of impreſſing traces in the Brain which carry us to the love of Bodies, as well as the very uſe of Bodies. A Drunkard, who ſpeaks of Wine as of his God, who deſpiſes thoſe who know not how to drink, and who places amongſt his braveſt Actions the Victories which he hath got at the Table againſt the greateſt Debauchees of the Province, ſuch a Drunkard, in his gay humor eaſily perſuades a young Man that 'tis a fine quality to drink as much Wine as two Horſes can drink Water. 'Tis for this that in all places where Men ſpeak of drinking much, as of a Vertue, all the World drinks to exceſs; for even thoſe who don't at firſt delight in drinking, doing as others, to avoid being the Subject of their Companions Ralleries, they are by degrees ſo accuſtom'd to Wine, that they can't be without it.

Thus, *Eraſtus*, as Concupiſcence does principally reſide

ſide in the traces of the Brain, which incline the Soul to the love of ſenſible things, it muſt be depriv'd of all things which produce theſe traces, not only of the actual uſe of Bodies, which is of no uſe to the preſervation of health and life, but alſo of the Converſation of Debauchees, who ſpeak with eſteem of the objects of their paſſions.

'Tis pleaſure, *Eraſtus*, which agitates the Spirits, and which produces dangerous traces, not only that which we enjoy by our Senſes, but that alſo which we enjoy by Imagination; not only the taſte, but alſo the deſire. And ſometimes the Imagination does ſo augment all things, that the pleaſure it produces excites the Concupiſcence after a more ſtrong and lively manner, than that we enjoy even in the uſe of Bodies.

Perſons who have too quick and delicate an Imagination, may ſometimes cure the hurt they have received in a contagious diſcourſe, by taſting the pleaſures which are repreſented to them, or of which they form'd themſelves too great an Idea. And there are certain baſhful, lazy and judicious perſons, and of a certain diſpoſition of mind hard to deſcribe, to whom it is convenient ſometimes to ſhew the world, to give 'em a diſlike of it.

But, *Eraſtus*, this is rare, and 'tis extremely dangerous to be familiariz'd with ſenſible things. You have an horror for Tobacco, you are pleas'd not to be ſubject to the neceſſity of always having ſome with you; yet if you were to be with Men who frequently uſe it, their diſcourſe and manner would engage you by degrees to uſe it your ſelf, and Uſe would ſubject you to it as well as others; for I know ſome who can't be without it, that could not endure it heretofore.

Eraſt. It is true, *Theodorus*, that the great Secret to reſiſt Concupiſcence, is to have continually an eye to the pu-

rity of our Imagination, and to take heed that it leave not footsteps in the Brain, which may carry us to the love of sensible things, thus to remedy the beginning of our Irregularities. The Councels of *JESUS CHRIST*, which only tend to deprive us of the use of sensible things are admirable, but they are very uneasie; methinks Philosophy furnishes us with a Remedy more commodious than that of the Gospel, 'tis this:

Philosophy teaches me, that all Bodies which are about me can't act in me, and that 'tis God only that causes in me the pleasure and grief which I feel in their use; this being granted, I can enjoy Bodies without loving them: for as I only ought to love that which is truly capable of making me happy, to excite in me the love of God, I have only to remember in the use of sensible things, that 'tis God who makes me happy by their means. Thus I ought not to shun Bodies, on the contrary I ought to seek them; that so by exciting pleasure in me, they may continually make me to think of God who is the cause of it.

Whence comes it that the Blessed love God constantly, and that they can't leave off loving him, if it is not that they see him, and that they are ty'd to him by a preingaging pleasure? Well then, I see God by Philosophy, I perceive him in every thing; if I eat, I think of God, because 'tis God that makes me eat with pleasure; I'm not careful to love good entertainment, as there's nothing but God which acts in me, I only love him.

Theod. You, *Eraſtus*, are free from sin, and confirm'd in grace, for who shall disunite you from God? the most violent pleasures tie you more strongly to him, and pains can only produce in you a fear and respect for him; but do you your self often make use of your

own

own Remedy, and have you never acted contrary to the remorse of your Conscience?

Erast. I am very sensible, *Theodorus*, that this Remedy of my Philosophy is not soveraign, but pray explain to us the defects of it.

Theod. I will: When you taste of Fruit with pleasure, your Reason tells you that there is a God whom you see not, who causes in you this pleasure; your Senses tell you on the contrary, that this Fruit which you see, which you hold in your hands, and which you eat, is that which causes in you this pleasure; which of these two speaks higher, your Reason or your Senses? As for me, I find that the noise of my Senses is so great, that I even think not of God in that moment; but perhaps *Erastus* is such a Philosopher, that his Senses are silent as soon as he pleases, and that they never speak to him without first obtaining his Licence. If so, your Remedy is good for you for the privation of Bodies is not absolutely necessary to those who have no Concupiscence. *Adam* could taste of pleasures without becoming their Slave, tho he had done better to have let them alone.

Then let those who feel no Concupiscence in them, and whose Body is intirely subject to the Spirit, make use of your Remedy, 'tis good for them: they are just by themselves, they descend in a right Line from the *Pre-Adamites*. Neither did Christ come for them, he came not to save the Just, but Sinners. He came for us who are Sinners, Children of a sinful Parent, sold, and subject to Sin, and who always feel in our Bodies the Rebellion of our Senses and Passions.

When the obligation we have to preserve our health and life constrains us to enjoy some pleasure, then we

must make a neceſſity of Virtue, and make uſe of your Remedy if we can, remembring that theſe are not the Objects which cauſe in us this pleaſure, but God only, we muſt thank him for them, and pray to him that he would defend us from the malignity of ſenſible Objects, we muſt uſe them with fear, and with a kind of horror; for without the grace of *JESUS CHRIST*, that which gives life to the Body, gives death to the Soul, you know the Reaſons of it.

Eraſt. But why? Pleaſure in itſelf is not ill, I receive it, then it does me no harm, I thank God for it, and love him the more; it unites me to God, who is the Author of it, then it does me good.

Theod. The love of God, which the enjoyment of Pleaſure cauſes in you is much intereſted; I'm much afraid, *Eraſtus*, that in loving God as the Author of your Pleaſure, you love your ſelf inſtead of loving God. But I wiſh that this love be not ill, I alſo wiſh that you have the power of raiſing your ſelf up to God, in the time that you enjoy ſome Pleaſure, but this Pleaſure makes traces in the Brain, theſe traces continually agitate the Soul, and in the time of Prayer, or ſome other neceſſary buſineſs, they diſturb the Action, blind the Mind, and ſtir up the Paſſions. Thus when you would even make a good uſe of Pleaſure, at the moment that you ſhould taſte it, the trouble that it diſperſes thro' the Imagination, has ſo dangerous Conſequences, that you had better have been depriv'd of it.

Think you, *Eraſtus*, that there has been a Race of Mankind ſo very ſtupid, as to get drunk for the honor of God, and to bring him into one's mind for the pleaſure of drunkenneſs; and do you obſerve, that the pleaſure which is found in the exceſſive uſe of ſen-

ſenſible things, is ſuch as can't be pray'd for to God without remorſe. Hence it is, that this pleaſure was not ordain'd by Nature to carry us directly to God, but for the uſe of Bodies, ſo far as they ſhall be neceſſary for the preſervation of life.

We muſt love God, becauſe Reaſon informs us, that every thing is center'd in him that deſerves our love. God will be lov'd with a clear love, with a love which flows from pure light, and not with a confus'd Sentiment ſuch as Pleaſure is. God is ſo lovely, that thoſe who ſee him as he is, would love him in the midſt of the moſt cruel Torments; and we do not love him as he deſerves, when we love him becauſe 'tis he only who can create agreeable Sentiments in us.

A Friend reproves us, becauſe he ſhould do it; we offend our ſelves, when we puniſh our ſelves for our Irregularities, do we therefore ceaſe to love our ſelves or our Friend? No, doubtleſs, we endeavor, perhaps, to ſhun the Reproof which our Friend thinks himſelf oblig'd to give us; but if we ſee that he only does what he ought to do, we are unreaſonable, if we ceaſe to have an intrinſic reſpect and love for him.

If then a perſon could conceive that God ows that to his Juſtice, which he inflicts upon him to make him ſenſible of the higheſt pains, he always would ſuffer patiently, without ceaſing to love God. He ſhould not love theſe pains in themſelves, but he ſhould love the Author of them, who, if he did not inflict them, would be leſs lovely, becauſe he would be leſs juſt, and leſs perfect.

A Criminal who hath brib'd his Judge, loves and eſteems him much leſs than if he had puniſht him; provided that this Criminal, who is not juſt enough to hate the Crime in himſelf, would be reaſonable enough

to

to hate it in another. Accordingly the bleſſed might ſuffer the pains of the damned, without hating God; for altho' the pleaſure they enjoy keeps them united to God inſeparably, yet they love not God for the ſake of the pleaſure which they receive from him, they would even love him in their Torments: For, after all, pleaſure is not ſo much inſtituted to make us love the Author of it, as to unite us to him, ſince, as reaſonable Creatures, Reaſon alone ought to ſtir up our love.

Pleaſure ſhould carry us to the cauſe of it, and true Good ſhould be capable of producing it, becauſe true Good ſhould recompence all thoſe who truly love: But pleaſure, which is the recompence and attraction of the love of the Juſt, is not their end, for the Juſt would then love themſelves inſtead of their good. God deſerves love in himſelf, and the pleaſure which is found in the uſe of Bodies, inſtead of inviting, is to love him as we ought to do, and even the ſweetneſs which is taſted in love, ſets us at a diſtance from him, if reſting upon this ſweetneſs we love him not for himſelf, for then we love our ſelves inſtead of him.

Eraſt. I obſerve that there's nothing more dangerous than to make uſe of ſenſible pleaſures, and I am am now convinc'd that they increaſe Concupiſcence, by the impreſſions which they make in the Brains, and carry the mind not to God, who is their Author, but to Bodies which ſeem to produce them, and that tho' (abſolutely ſpeaking) they may induce us to think of God who is their Author, yet they excite in us nothing but an intereſted love, a love which is more like Self-love, than true Charity.

Ariſt. But, *Theodorus*, the Law of Nature does not only oblige us to love God, but alſo Men; and if we have

have not ſome Correſpondence with them by means of the Body, what other Reaſon will induce us to love them? 'Tis Intereſt which forms Societies. 'Tis Pleaſure which unites different Sexes; and there are whole Nations that can't maintain Peace and Commerce but by the means of Wine. To drink together is ſufficient to put away Enmity amongſt ſome Men. A glaſs of Wine muſt be drunk to drive on a Bargain. Thus you ſee it is profitable for Men to enjoy Pleaſure together, to preſerve that Union and Charity amongſt them which is commanded them.

Theod. I believe you have a mind to make your ſelf merry, *Ariſtarchus*, What! do you believe that there's any thing beſides Truth and Juſtice, which can ſtrictly unite us together? do you believe that a Peace concluded in drink betwixt Drunkards, would be ſo ſolid as that which reaſonable Men make in the ſight of Juſtice, and by a Motive of Charity? Certainly all the Bonds which are made by Intereſt, are unſerviceable towards the fulfilling of the Precept of loving our Neighbor. The Appearances are ſav'd, and Men are treated with Civility, but cordial Love is wanting, when Intereſt lies at the ſtake. We muſt love other Men for God; for as it is he that ſhould terminate all the motions of our heart, he can only reunite all minds in himſelf. But the Commerce which we may have with Men by means of the Body, are only proper to create a diviſion amongſt us; for ſenſible Goods are not like thoſe of the mind, one can't poſſeſs them without ſharing them. It's enough for a Man to deſire an enjoyment of his Friend's Eſtate, to make him unhappy and become his Enemy. It's the Love of temporal advantage which begets Wars, and breeds Diviſion in Families. Perſons would enjoy theſe Goods,

Goods, but can't, without depriving those of them that possess them. Thus 'tis evident, that a contempt of sensible Goods, and a privation of Pleasures, are as useful for the preservation of Peace amongst them, as to continue a strict Union with God.

Arist. 'Tis true, *Theodorus*, that to avoid a quarrel with any Body, there's no better means than to yield our Possessions to those that desire them of us, but the Command of Jesus Christ in this matter is very inconvenient, and I do not see that even the most perfect follow it.

Theod. I confess it, *Aristarchus*, there are many occasions on which we should not too rigidly pursue this Command, but we must always be disposed to it if there be necessity. 'Tis not the difficulty that we find in this Command, and in the rest, which ought to hinder us from practising them; on the contrary, they are so much the more useful, as they tend more to satisfy the * Justice of God, and to merit the Favor of our perfect reunion with him.

* *Pontificius loquitur.*

We are all Sinners, and deserve to suffer; and these instructions of Privation being painful, they have this advantage, that they cleanse us from our Sins, in making us partakers in the Sufferings of *CHRIST.*

In our misery we have all of us need of the assistance of Heaven, but *CHRIST* teaches us to merit them, when our Sufferings being join'd to his, our Sufferings are meritorious with his. Thus the Inconveniency you find in the Precepts of *CHRIST*, bring their Recommendation along with them.

If the trouble which attends the privation of sensible Objects were not necessary to satisfy God, nor merit

merit his Assistance, of which we have the greatest need, I confess there would be a fault in the Evangelic Councils; nevertheless there would be none better, for the Reasons I have produc'd. But these Instructions do so perfectly and universally remedy all our Evils, they are so proportion'd to the Condition which Sin has reduc'd us to, that if we cannot follow them, we can't yet forbear to admire them.

Eraſt. 'Tis true, the Instructions of *CHRIST* do perfectly remedy Concupiscence, but 'tis provided we follow them. We can do only those things which we would do, and we are commanded to do what we would not; for 'tis pleasure that makes us willing, and the Gospel forbids it; Who then shall be able to follow these Instructions? I am much afraid that *Ariſtarchus*'s Friend will say, That Christian Morality resembles *Plato*'s Politicks; that 'tis beautiful in its *Idea*, but has this essential fault, which renders it wholly unprofitable, that Men are incapable of it.

Theod. It's necessary, *Eraſtus*, that Christianity should be such as it is to be perfect, you agree with me in this, but say it's impossible to follow it. Yes, *Eraſtus*, 'tis so without *CHRIST*, but with him all things are possible. He is our Strength, as well as our Wisdom. If he counsels us to act contrary to our Wills, 'tis because he is able to change our hearts. He is not like *Plato*, who gives Laws to establish a Republic, but does not make Men capable of observing those Laws. *CHRIST* hath establish'd the most perfect Morality that can be, and at the same time gives Men a power to act agreeably; he regenerates them, and strips them of the Old Man; he gives them a heart of flesh, in which he writes those Laws which the *Jews* receiv'd from *Moſes* written in Stone;

Stone; Faith and Experience teaches us these things.

The Republic of *Plato* is a Republic in *Idea*, it is not made up of Men; but how many Christians, even in a strict Sense, pursue the Counsels of their Master? How many Religious Saints continually mortify their Senses and Passions, and labour with all their Might to destroy the Body of Sin, this Old Man, whose desires disturb their peace and hopes?

It's necessary, *Eraſtus*, that the power of God appear in the execution of the Precepts of Morality, that we may not doubt of the truth of Religion. It's necessary that there be nothing *humane* in the Religion which God establishes, to the end that it attribute nothing of its establishment to the Politics of Princes; the inclination of Men, and the natural disposition of their minds.

The Precepts of *CHRIST*, tho' painful in themselves, yet being followed, justify Religion; and known Religion makes men obedient to his Precepts. He in whom we believe enables us to act as we act, and what we thus act is so much above our power, that it makes us believe what we believe. Thus the Precepts of *CHRIST* far from being unprofitable, because they appear difficult and uneasy to us, ought to be esteem'd by us wholly Divine, since he that is wise enough to give them to us, is also powerful enough to assist us. We shall speak something the next Meeting of this power by which we are enabled to fulfil the Precepts of the Gospel. Pray, *Eraſtus*, think of it with your Friend, so that our next Discourse may be the more satisfactory.

CHAP.

DIALOGUE IX.

The ſame Subject continued.

Ariſt. I Have thought on thoſe things you ſaid to us yeſterday, *Theodorus*, and on thoſe whereof we are to treat this day. I am convinc'd of the firſt, and I will tell you what I think of the others.

I look upon Man as being between Heaven and Earth, between the place of his Reſt and Felicity, and that of his Troubles and Miſeries; faſten'd to God, yet knowing him not; faſten'd to Bodies, which he ſees. Seeing that pleaſure moves and tranſports him, and that, whilſt he enjoys it, he doth not ſee Him who is the true cauſe of it in the ſame manner as he ſees and feels the Bodies that are the occaſion of it, he runs with Fury after Bodies, and doth not ſo much as think on God. So it is neceſſary that he deprive himſelf of ſenſible pleaſures, if he will ſtop the motion that draws him out of the way to Heaven, and carries him towards earthly things; this is plain; but a privation of pleaſure is not yet ſufficient to raiſe him towards Heaven.

Let us ſuppoſe, *Theodorus*, a Balance, one of whoſe Scales is empty, and the other heavily laden; tho'

tho by little and little you take out of the Scale what was in it, till there remain almoſt nothing in it, notwithſtanding all this, there will be no alteration in the Balance: For this you muſt altogether empty it, or lay ſomething of weight in the other Scale, that may poize it equally.

Now our Mind is like a Balance; nor is it perfectly free in one ſenſe, but when the weight that tranſports and captivates it, is equal for Heaven and Earth, or rather when there is no weight of either ſide: For then the Mind being as it were *in Æquilibrio*, eaſily moves of itſelf towards that which by reaſon it finds to be its true good. It is not mov'd nor determin'd by preingaging pleaſure, but by reaſon alone; its ſenſes have no ſhare in the Act; it's love is an underſtanding love, and altogether worthy of it.

Adam, before his Fall, having no Concupiſcence, his Senſes and his Paſſions yielding to him as ſoon as he deſir'd it, in ſhort, being not drawn in ſpite of himſelf to the love of ſenſible things, by involontary and rebellious preingaging pleaſures, he was perfectly free, and ſtood in no want of that kind of Grace which conſiſts in a preingaging delectation; becauſe the Balance was not ſway'd on either ſide by any weight.

But now that one of the Cups of the Balance is extremely loaded, we cannot be free in the ſame manner as the firſt Man; for even the moſt Righteous Perſons cannot entirely free themſelves of the weight of Concupiſcence. All they can do, is to leſſen the weight by retirement, by a privation of pleaſures, and a continual mortification of their Senſes and Paſſions. But not being able to bring that weight to nothing, they ſtand in need of the delectation of Grace to counterpoize it, and put the Scale in a perfect *Æquilibrium*.

I there-

I therefore believe *Theodorus*, that for us to deny our ſelves the Pleaſures of this World, is not ſufficient to deliver us wholly from being Slaves to them, but that in order to this we ſtand in abſolute need of Chriſt's * Grace. But as a ſmall Weight is able to make a pair of Scales even, when one of them has very little in it, 'tis plain that a leſſening of the weight of Sin, or a denying ones ſelf the uſe of Worldly Pleaſure, is the beſt preparation in order to receive, not only Grace, but even the efficacy of Grace (provided this Self denyal be an effect of the dictates of God's Spirit.) For 'tis evident that the efficacy of Grace commonly depends on the diſpoſition which we are in, with reſpect to Worldly things, as a Weights acting in a pair of Scales depends, as to its effect, on the force of the contrary Weights.

* Note, *By Chriſt's Grace, is here meant that which he has particularly merited us, which conſiſts for in a preingaging delectation, or in a loathing which he cauſes us to have for falſe good: For the Graces of Light and Joy which Chriſt hat halſo merited for us, are common to us with the Firſt Man, who, knowing no Concupiſcence, had no need of preingaging Pleaſures, as we have explained it in the foregoing Dialogue.*

As every Weight preſſes downward, ſo in one ſence every Grace is efficacious, or draws us towards God; but as every Weight does not make the Scales even, nor turns them when another Weight hinders it, ſo every Grace does not ſet us wholly free, nor does it force us towards God. So that every Grace may be ſaid to be efficacious, though it turn not a Heart entirely, and every Grace is ſufficient to do this, when we are well prepar'd to receive it; for there is no Weight, how ſmall ſoever it may be, but what may ſet a pair of Scales even, when the obſtacle is very light.

Thus the efficacy and ſufficiency of Grace may be conſider'd in themſelves, or relatively: If we examine them in themſelves, any Grace will appear to be efficacious, and conſequently ſufficient; if relatively, we ſhall find it ſometimes efficacious and ſufficient, and ſometimes not. Yet not but that God may beſtow on a Sinner ſome Graces whoſe efficacy all the malignity of Sin could never hinder; for though we ſuppoſe a Ballance to be extreamly fill'd on one ſide, there may yet be found a Weight great enough to make it even.

This is what came into my Mind upon the ſubject matter of our Conference.

Theod. Your Reflections are Juſt; but your Compariſon does not ſay enough yet. Pray, *Ariſtarchus*, what do you mean by this word *Grace?* 'Tis a looſe and undetermin'd expreſſion, which, like ſome words uſed by Logicians, can give no diſtinct Idea of any thing, principally to ſuch a one as *Eraſtus*. Do you underſtand by this word barely preingaging Delectation?

Ariſt. Hitherto I only meant this kind of Delectation: But by the word *Grace*, we may underſtand whatever is capable of making the Scales even, and of drawing the Mind towards God, or of fixing it ſtrongly to him, if it be united to him already.

Theod. All this is ſtill very general. Pray tell me *Eraſtus*, do you know what are the things that are capable of drawing us towards God, and of fixing us ſtrongly to him?

Eraſtus, I do not know them all in particular; but it ſeems to me in general, that only Light and Pleaſure make us love him, and that, beſides Light and Pleaſure, Joy may confirm our Love, though it never begins

begins it; ſince, when I examine my ſelf, I know no other motive of my particular will. If I begin to love any thing, it is either becauſe I know, or feel that this thing is good for me; and if I continue to love it, 'tis becauſe I continue to know or feel that this thing is good for me; or elſe it is that I rejoyce at the ſight or taſte of the good that I poſſeſs.

Theod. Thus, *Eraſtus*, all the Graces of which you have an Idea, which carry you towards good, are either Graces of Light which enlighten the Mind without determining it, or Graces of preingaging Pleaſure which determine the Mind without enlightning it, or Graces of Joy which follow the Light and Determination of the Mind, and only ſerve to confirm it in its choice. You do not ſpeak of being ignorant of falſe good, or ween'd from it, nor do you ſpeak of the Loathing which we come to have of it, nor of the ſorrow we conceive at the ſight of our miſery when we rejoyce in this falſe good. But I plainly ſee the Reaſon of it: 'Tis that theſe ſorts of Graces do not by themſelves carry us towards our true good, though they are often neceſſary that the Graces which by themſelves carry towards that true good may act.

Eraſt. This is true, *Theodorus*.

Theod. But 'pray, *Eraſtus*, what think you of the neceſſity of Grace? Are you of *Ariſtarchus*'s Opinion?

Eraſt. Altogether, *Theodorus*: I believe that a ſelf-denyal as to ſenſible Pleaſure, after what manner ſoever you may imagine it to be, cannot of it ſelf reunite us to God, though the efficacy or the prevailing of the Grace of Chriſt depends on that for the moſt part. I believe that all Men have need of the Light

of Faith, and that thoſe who are tempted by violent Pleaſures cannot overcome them by the Grace of Light only : I believe they have ſtill need of preingaging Pleaſure, eſpecially if they are us'd to follow the motions of their Paſſions. As for the Righteous whoſe Hearts are ſtrongly fixt on God, though they cannot overcome a Temptation without actual help, I believe that Light alone, which they never want in preſſing occaſions, is commonly ſufficient for that, and that the Joy which they feel in the practice of Vertue, works in them the ſame effect that preingaging Pleaſure does in thoſe who are beginning that Converſion.

Theod. But, *Eraſtus*, why do you ſay that the Righteous never want Light in great Temptations that tend to draw them away from God?

Eraſt. 'Tis becauſe the Righteous are only ſuch ſo far as they love God. Now thoſe that love him, even when they are in danger of loſing him, have a deſire to keep to him ; but they cannot deſire to keep to him without thinking upon the means that may ſerve to that end, nor without repreſenting to themſelves the greatneſs of their loſs.

Theod. Why ſo, *Eraſtus*?

Eraſt. Becauſe the Natural Prayer that obtains of God the lively Idea of an Object is the actual Will of thinking on this Object. For when we will think on any thing, the Idea of this thing preſents its ſelf to our Mind, and this Idea is ſo much the more lively the more firm our Will is.

A Juſt Man loves God more than all other things, and in a Temptation, by which he is in danger of loſing God, is in a condition of ſeeing his loſs ; nor can he ſee it without being ſenſible of it, nor without deſiring to avoid it. His Will therefore Naturally requires

requires Light, and obtains ſo much the more of it, the ſtronger his Deſire is, and the more fervent his Love; for 'tis this Love that prays as it ought, and is always heard.

Theod. This is true, *Eraſtus*: Our Good cannot be ſnatch'd from us, but that at the ſame time we muſt be deſirous to preſerve it, and this Deſire or Will is always followed by Light; for nothing gives ſo much Light as Intereſt. Thoſe that look upon God as their true Good have commonly Light enough in the dangers of Temptations, and uſually find out means to avoid them. But, *Eraſtus*, this only happens when the Love is ſtrong, and the Temptation weak. There are ſome Righteous Men who love God above all things, yet whoſe Love is not lively, being ſuffer'd by them to languiſh for want of Nouriſhment, and weaken'd extreamly by that Concupiſcence which inceſſantly wars againſt it; ſo that the Ideas, which, according to the Laws of Nature, preſent themſelves to their Minds in Temptation, diſſipate and vaniſh in a moment; they are of no ſubſtance nor conſiſtence: But the Ideas which according to the Laws of Nature are excited in the motions of the Paſſions are ſenſible. Thus, *Eraſtus*, leſt the Righteous ſhould fall, God muſt either give them a greater Light than that which ſhould enſue from their love, according to the Laws of Nature, or awaken and fortifie their love by a preingaging delectation. But becauſe he does it if he pleaſes, and as much as he pleaſes (this not being in courſe of Nature *a thing* to which he is oblig'd) the Light of the Righteous and the Diſpoſition of their Hearts, as ſufficient as it is, does not always give them the victory in the time of Temptation.

Eraſt. 'Tis a very ſad thing that even the Righteous——

Theod. It is true, *Eraſtus*, but the Righteous can pray. God has obliged himſelf by his Promiſes, which he keeps as inviolably as the Laws of Nature, to give them continually actual and efficacious help, if they have need of it. The Righteous are Members of *Chriſt*; they are animated with the Spirit of Chriſt; 'tis, as we may ſay, Chriſt that prays in them, and God can refuſe nothing to his Son: For the Righteous obtain nothing that they ask, unleſs they ask it in the Name of Chriſt, and in order to preſerve the Spirit of Chriſt within them.

Eraſt. But, *Theodorus*, when a Righteous Man through negligence lets his love decay, when he lets the Light and Life of the Spirit dye in him, God knows his wants, God loves him, for every Righteous Man is loved of God; why then does he ſtay till he pray to him? Why does he not grant before he demands? Why does he not protect and defend him?

Theod. God does not always ſtay till the Righteous pray to him, but often gives them help which they ask not of him; and if he does command them to ask it of him, it is becauſe he will be lov'd and ador'd for it. God knows our wants better than we do our ſelves; and if he commands us to pray to him, 'tis to oblige us to think on him, and to look upon him as the only Being that is able to fill us with good things; 'tis to excite and awaken our love towards him; and not to learn of us either our wants or the motives he has to relieve us. He is reſolv'd to be gracious to us upon his Sons account, and if it is his will that we pray to him for it in his Sons Name, 'tis that we may love him and his Son.

'Tis

'Tis love that prays, 'tis reſpect, 'tis the diſpoſition of the Mind and Heart: For we cannot pray to God without actually believing a great many things concerning him and us, without actually hoping in him, and actually loving him. But acts ſtir up and even beget habits; therefore 'tis principally to awaken in us our Faith, our Hope and our Love, that God commands us to pray to him.

But when our Faith is lively, our Hope firm and our Love ardent, it is not poſſible, according to the very Laws of Nature, we ſhould want a lively and efficacious Light. For, as you ſay, 'tis impoſſible that what we love ſhould be ſnatch'd away from us without exciting in us a deſire to preſerve it; and this deſire is naturally follow'd with a proſpect of the means to preſerve it.

Beſides, the Joy we find in the poſſeſſion of what we ardently love is of great force: For the Righteous poſſeſs God by the fore-taſte of their hope, and this fore-taſte accompanied with light is able to make them overcome the ſtrongeſt Temptations, becauſe it makes them embrace with Joy the means that the Light offers them. Thus Prayer is the nouriſhment of the Soul, and by it it receives new ſtrength, by it it thinks on God, and comes into his preſence, unites its ſelf to him, that is its whole ſtrength; and even it receives of God, through Chriſt, the delectation of Grace to counterballance thoſe preingaging Pleaſures which it receives alſo of God (for 'tis God alone that acts in it) but which are involuntary and rebellious by reaſon of *Adam's* diſobedience.

And you ought to obſerve, *Eraſtus*, that the Righteous have always in them the ſtrength to pray (ſeeing it is Love that prays) and conſequently ſtrength to

obtain an increaſe of their Love, ſeeing that God has obliged himſelf by his Promiſes to grant them their Prayers. Nay they can eaſily make uſe of this ſtrength they have to pray at all times in which they have liberty of Spirit, and need of Prayer, eſpecially if they live in a retirement, and deny themſelves ſenſual Pleaſures. For, as the Righteous love God, it is eaſie for them, when they have liberty of Mind, and perceive that any thing ſets them at a diſtance from God, to make ſome attempt to return to him again: And this effort is an efficacious Prayer which is rewarded according to the greatneſs of the effort. They may fly to Chriſt, think on his Counſels and Examples; and if they cannot eaſily imitate his Life, they may at leaſt deſire to do it, they may ſtrengthen their hope and raiſe their love, by praying with Faith and Humility in the proſpect of the Merits of Chriſt.

Ariſt. They may do what you ſay, if they think upon it: But if they do not think upon it, certainly they cannot do it; for none can do what you ſay without thinking on it.

Theod. They alwayes think upon it, *Ariſtarchus*, when it is neceſſary, becauſe, being righteous, they love God. For thoſe that love God have him ſtill preſent when there is danger of loſing him; becauſe we cannot have that which we love ſnatch'd away from us, and not deſire to preſerve it. I ſuppoſe, in the mean time, that they preſerve the Liberty of their Minds by putting away Senſual Pleaſures; for ſometimes the Imagination is ſo taken up and troubled by the Action of Bodies that are about us, and by the Motion of the Spirits which the Paſſions raiſe in us, that we may loſe God eaſily enough, and without making all the Reflections

ctions which I believe neceſſary to preſerve and fortifie Love.

Eraſt. Thus, *Theodorus*, we ſhould always return to the Counſels of Chriſt. There is nothing more neceſſary for the Righteous, as well as for Sinners, than to remove from the Noiſie World and Violent Pleaſures; and I believe that thoſe who ſet no Bounds to their Pleaſures, nor to their Paſſions, can hardly continue in this Preſence of God which bears up and fortifies their Love. I fancy that the Hurry, Muſic, Pomp, Magnificence, and other Allurements that are at Publick Places, would very much perplex my Mind, if I ſhould reſort thither; for, they ſay, the Authors of thoſe Sports, which you formerly frequented ſo much, *Ariſtarchus*, have no other deſign than to raiſe the Paſſions, and bewitch the Imagination. I think that if any Temptation ſurprized me in thoſe Places, I ſhould not be Maſter of my ſelf enough to reſiſt it; ſo I'm reſolv'd never to go thither.

Theod. You ſpeak with a great deal of Reaſon, *Eraſtus*; We ſhould always ſeek the moſt *ſimple*, and moſt moderate Diverſions; we ſhould uſe Recreations as harmleſs as are thoſe of Children: But ſome People cannot be diverted without being diſturb'd; theſe do not take their Diverſion as you do, merely to unbend their Mind; alas! they never tire it with hard Study; they are for Diverſions that may give ſome reſpite to their Paſſions, which weary them too much becauſe they follow their violent Motions. Their deſign is not by this means to ſettle again the Imagination in its natural Seat after it has been harraſs'd by Meditation; but rather to put out of their Mind ſome ambitious, or other unruly Thoughts which the Paſſions have excited, and which are no longer pleaſing to them; that ſo they

they may make themſelves more happy in following the Motions of Paſſions ſofter and more moderate than thoſe that commonly move them: for after all, the Paſſions which are Acted on the Stage do not ſo violently move us, as thoſe whoſe Object is real and ſubſtantial.

Eraſt. Certainly, *Theodorus*, theſe Perſons are very miſerable; their Imagination is much diſordered; Concupiſcence, or the weight of Sin, (to uſe *Ariſtarchus*'s Expreſſion) weighs heavy in their Scale, and there had need be a great deal of pre-ingaging Pleaſure to counterballance it.

In the mean time, they hope to be ſav'd like other Chriſtians, and imagine, that, though they do not prepare themſelves for ordinary Graces by following the Counſels of Chriſt, God will give them thoſe extraordinary Graces which overcome all the Malignity of the moſt corrupt Minds. In ſhort, they ſay that it belongs to God to convert them.

Theod. When I hear your voluptuous or ambitious Men complain that God does not give them ſuch Graces as may work their Converſion, methinks I ſee a Company of cruel Wretches that ſtab themſelves, and at the ſame time accuſe God of the barbarity which they uſe againſt themſelves. They expect that he ſhould do them good, while they are doing themſelves harm; and at the very time that they cauſe in their Bodies ſuch Motions as by the Order of Nature are ſtill to be attended with Pain, they would have God to alter that Order and Work Miracles for their ſakes.

We cannot too often call to mind, that God always acts by the moſt ſimple Means, and inviolably keeps the Laws which he has preſcribed to himſelf, not only in the Order of Nature but alſo in that of Grace. The

ſimpleſt and ſhorteſt way for the Converſion of Sinners, is, that they deprive themſelves of Pleaſures; this is plain: They muſt therefore begin with this, and not flatter themſelves with the hopes of ſuch extraordinary Graces as may really be eſteemed Miracles in the Order of Grace.

If we deſire to live, we muſt eat; if we would enjoy ſome Pleaſure, we muſt excite within our Body thoſe Motions which Nature has decreed ſhould be attended with pleaſing Senſations; for, theſe Motions oblige God, in Conſequence of his Will, to cauſe us to feel the Pleaſure which we wiſhed for. So, if we would attain to a regenerate ſtate, and live the Life of Grace, we ought to ween our ſelves of ſenſible Objects, mortifie the Luſts of the Fleſh, and pray without ceaſing. Our Repentance and our Prayers will prevail with God, according to his Promiſe, to beſtow on us ſuch Graces as are able to regenerate us. But if we follow the Impulſe of our Paſſions, and rely on the Efficacy of extraordinary Graces, 'tis as if ſome Madmen ſhould caſt themſelves headlong down a Precipice, in hopes that God would do a Miracle to ſave them.

When we do not know what the Laws of Nature are, we learn them by Experiments; but, when we know what thoſe Laws are, we look upon them to be inviolable, and, conforming our Actions to them, we do not pretend to overturn them. So, a Perſon who does not know that Fire may offend him, comes too near it; but he no ſooner knows how it acts on him, but that he takes greater Care of himſelf, neither does he think that the Fire ought to reſpect him if he ſhould preſume to throw himſelf in the midſt of its Flames. Now if we are ignorant in the Laws of Grace, we ought

ought to inform our ſelves about them, and when we know what they are, we muſt be conformable to them, and not think we may break them as we pleaſe; For, God's Will can never be made to depend on our Caprichios.

The Natural Philoſophers have but a very imperfect Inſight into the particular Laws of Nature; for, Experiments, which are the ſureſt Means to diſcover them, are very uncertain: yet, they revere and fear thoſe Laws, as unknown as they are to them; and ſhall Chriſtians, void of all Veneration and Fear for the Laws of Grace, which they do not know, preſume to reconcile all Things to their Deſigns? They know the Poyſon, but becauſe it ſeems pleaſant, they ſwallow it without horrour.

Reaſon teaches them, as we diſcover'd it at our laſt Conference, that the ſhorteſt way for the Reſtauration of Nature is Self-denial; the inward Sentiment of their Conſcience confirms the Decree of their Reaſon; the Admonitions of our Saviour, his Example, thoſe of all good Men, do not ſuffer them to doubt of it; yet they take pleaſure in blinding themſelves not to diſcover the neceſſity they lye under to follow that Means; and if they find themſelves oblig'd to own how neceſſary it is to follow this Direction given us by Chriſt, all the deference they pay to it is often barely exteriour; denying themſelves ſome certain Things which they do not value; and ſuffering a carnal Circumciſion, that is not the Circumciſion of the Heart which God requires of them.

When we conſider the Life of our Saviour's Forerunner, who was, in a manner, the Perſonal Preparation to Subſtantial Grace; for, St. *John* the Baptiſt was ſent to repreſent to us by his Preaching and Holi-

neſs

neſs of Life all the things that prepare us for the receiving of Grace, as Chriſt was ſent to impart it to us: When we conſider, I ſay, that living Pattern of Preparation to Grace, we ſee in him nothing but a ſeparation from the World, a continual ſelf-denyal even as to the things that ſeem needful for the upholding of Life; for you know what is ſaid of him in the Goſpel, *Matth.* 3. 4. Thus his Example ſufficiently teaches us what we are to do to befit our ſelves for the receiving of Grace. But our imagination, wholly deprav'd by ſenſible Pleaſures, ſoon takes off our Eyes from this model of Mortification and Penitence, to mould us another of ſome Perſon whom the World eſteems a good Man, though he indulges himſelf in the Pleaſures which St. *John* diſclaim'd as contrary to the ways through which Chriſt comes to dwell in us.

Ariſt. I muſt needs own to you, *Theodorus*, that all the Heroes whom I have hitherto ſet before my ſelf as living Exemplars to walk by, are more generous and communicative than St. *John the Baptiſt*, ſince they are not afraid of being ſociable, nor of complying with the World; injoying certain Pleaſures which they term Civil and Gentleman-like Recreations. I don't know whether they allow themſelves this freedom as knowing themſelves ſtrong enough to overcome them; but I think my ſelf obliged in Conſcience to let *Eraſtus* know that I never fail'd to become a ſlave to a great many Pleaſures, when, like theſe Heroic Gentlemen I was not afraid to enjoy them.

Eraſt. I would not make the Opinion of the Multitude the Rule of my Conduct; I know we ought to follow a Rule, and be guided by Reaſon; ſince, to act only by a Principle of Imitation has more of the Brute in it than of the Man. I thank *Theodorus* for putting

me

me in mind of this. If we ſet our ſelves a Pattern to imitate, 'tis that its Example may excite us reſolutely to do what we know Reaſon directs us to perform: For, *as all Men are apt to err and to ſin, no Man can be to us an infallible Rule*; Reaſon ought to correct the defects of the Exemplar.

Theod. Reaſon ought alſo to make choice of theſe Exemplars. For, many times our Imagination, dazzled by the deceitful luſtre of falſe Vertues, makes us admire a Heroe inſtead of a Saint; and becauſe 'tis much more pleaſant and eaſie to live like the firſt than like the latter, that we may juſtifie our conduct, we are very ready to ſet before our ſelves ſuch Exemplars as ſuit with our humours.

Eraſt. The ſureſt way is to imitate ſuch Exemplars as God preſcribes us to follow; ſince God cannot deceive us. Our Saviour's Precepts are undoubtedly the beſt, and St. *John*'s Conduct is altogether conſonant with them; we muſt then walk after him. Methinks Reaſon obliges me to retire like him to Deſarts, that I may avoid the Contagion which rages in the World, and prepare for the Grace of Chriſt. For, after all, Reaſon has convinc'd me that St. *John* is a good Pattern to imitate; the Holy Ghoſt ſets him before us in the Scripture, and our Saviour highly commends him for his holineſs of Life. What do you think, *Theodorus*, do you believe I ought to imitate him?

Theod. I don't know, *Eraſtus*; but if you ought not to follow him, I know you ought to follow Chriſt. As St. *John* prepar'd us for Grace, but did not beſtow it, he was to ſhow us an Example of the greateſt auſterity: 'Twas his Duty to take out of the Scale all the Weights in general that make it have a pro-

propenſity to cleave to the Earth, becauſe he could not give us the weight of Grace to make the Scales even. As the precurſor of the Author of Grace, he was to remove by his Preaching and Example all the impediments that kept us from receiving Chriſt. For this Reaſon it was fit he ſhould with the greateſt ſtrictneſs imaginable forbid us the uſe of Worldly injoyments; this was his Duty.

But Chriſt teaches us to make uſe of theſe things. The weight of his Grace ſets us free, becauſe it ſets the Scales even again. With that Grace we may live in the World without becoming ſlaves to it, becauſe it hinders us from loving the World. We may injoy the things of this World, becauſe by the means of his Grace we enjoy them without Pleaſure, *as enjoying them not*; or rather, becauſe the Pleaſure which attends Grace is ſtronger than that which we find in the uſe of theſe things. But we muſt take great care that the liberty which is given us by the Grace of Chriſt do not give us occaſion to live according to the Fleſh. We may be ſav'd without hating the World; and if while we live in the World we love it and become ſlaves to its Pomp, Reaſon teaches us that we ought to forſake it; for, we cannot overcome it without Chriſt; and if his Grace dwelt in us, we ſhould feel within our ſelves a Power able to overcome the World. We may uſe certain Pleaſures on ſome occaſions, but never without fear and horrour; and if we uſe them without fear and horrour, we ought to avoid them.

Charity obliges us to live with the reſt of Mankind; for, Grace does not deſtroy Civil Society: But the ſame Charity obliges us to ſettle ſuch a Communion with them as may not end with this Life.

I own

I own that Chriſt *did not come to ſend Peace on Earth: he came not to ſend Peace, but a Sword. He came to ſet a Man at variance againſt his Father, and the Daughter againſt her Mother, and the Daughter in law againſt the Mother in law*, Matth. 10. 34, 35. *If there be five in one houſe he is come to divide them, and to ſet three againſt two, and two againſt three*, Luke 12. 52. He came to ſet Man at variance even with himſelf. *If any man hate not his own life, and does not bear his Croſs and come after Chriſt, he cannot be his Diſciple*, nor worthy to be call'd a Chriſtian. But our Saviour came to do theſe things only that he might reunite us to God, reconcile us to our ſelves, and, even in this Life, begin a fellowſhip that is to laſt eternally.

Do you think, *Ariſtarchus*, you, whoſe Heart is ſo ſuſceptible of Friendſhip, that 'tis poſſible you ſhould here below have a real love for a perſon, except you love him as a Chriſtian? You may indeed love him well enough; ſo far as Civil Society, which depends on the relation which Bodies have to one another, requires it; but you are neither in a condition to know him ſuch as he is, nor even to know your ſelf. Do you fancy you ſee your Friend, when you behold a certain diſpoſition of matter, which is call'd a Face, or when you hear the ſound of words that move the Air? I don't believe you do. But if you do not ſee your Friend, what is it you love then, when you think you love him? Certainly you either muſt love your ſelf, and then your Love is ſelfiſh; or you love your Friend's Face, and then your Love is unworthy your Friend; or elſe you love your Friend's Vertue and upright Principles, and in that caſe your Friendſhip is juſt; but then 'tis a Chriſtian

Friend-

Friendſhip; for thus you love God in your Friend, or your Friend as he has a relation to God; you love him becauſe he belongs to God, lives according to God's Commands, and makes his own Will conformable to that of God.

And yet, Sir, your Friendſhip is ſtill imperfect becauſe you don't know what you love. As you don't ſee your Friend's Mind in a clear and diſtinct manner, you cannot really love him; for, if you ſaw him inwardly, you would perhaps abhor him.

Ariſt. You make me wiſh that my Friend may be worthy the Friendſhip I have for him: I am going to endeavour his Converſion. I have a world of things to ſay to him.

Theod. As he is capable of knowing and loving God, he cannot but be worthy your Friendſhip; for now nothing but that can recommend us to the love of one another, ſince we don't perfectly know each other.

We begin even in this Life to love God and our Neighbour; but becauſe we are not to have a clear ſight of God nor of our Neighbour till we are in Heaven, our Charity cannot be perfect till we are there.

Go, Sir, ſee your Friend. But, you *Eraſtus*, pray what do you think on?

Eraſt. *Ariſtarchus* thinks on his Friend, and I think on my ſelf: I don't know, *Theodorus*, whether I ſhall be here to morrow, or no. Methinks I ought to make a good uſe of the Truths you have taught me. I leave you; for, I am now too much diſorder'd; you doubtleſs perceive it well enough. I recommend all things to your Prayers.

The Tenth and Laſt
DIALOGUE.

Ariſt. I Have a great deal of News to tell you, *Theodorus*; my Friend at laſt is converted; but we have loſt *Eraſtus*.

Theod. Pray, what's become of him?

Ariſt. I juſt now diſcover'd it. His Mother and I wondring that he was not at home at Dinner-time, I went up into his Chamber to look for him, and found this Letter ſeal'd up on his Table.

For *Ariſtarchus*.

I *Am convinc'd*, Ariſtarchus, *by Reaſon and by Faith; by a clear Light, and an infallible Authority; by the intelligible words of inward Truth, and by the ſenſible words of incarnate Truth; in ſhort, by all that can convince a Rational and Chriſtian Soul; that the moſt ſafe and uſual way to come to God, is to ſeclude our ſelves from the World, and deprive our ſelves of all ſenſual things. But I ought to take the greater care; for, the more the buſineſs is of conſequence, the more 'tis neceſſary, difficult and dangerous. I ought therefore*, Ariſtarchus, *to retire to ſome place where I may be ſhelter'd againſt the perſecution of thoſe who would have me apply my ſelf to ſome ſtudies that are neceſſary*

neceſſary to qualifie a Gentleman for ſome Employments, to which I do not find my ſelf to have a particular Call.

'Tis true indeed I do not find my ſelf to have a particular and extraordinary call for the deſign I have: But there needs no particular Call when Reaſon alone, and the general vocation of Chriſtians is ſufficient. Without doubt thoſe who engage in the affairs of this World ought to have a particular Call to that way of living; for Reaſon and our general vocation teach us to do otherwiſe: But, as the World goes now, methinks a Man needs but to have common Senſe and to believe the Goſpel, to do what I have done.

However, as I would not engage in a particular Courſe of Life without a particular Call, I'll be ſtill ready to return to you, when 'tis neceſſary. But I declare, I would think my ſelf guilty of a leſs fault, ſhould I, without a particular Call, preſume to conform my ſelf to the way of living of the Religious Perſons with whom I intend to live; than if, without a Call, I enter'd into the Bonds of Matrimony, or took an Employment that would tye me to too many things.

All my Relations perſecute me, every one according to his humour and ambition. They have ends which I neither have nor would have. Beſides I would gladly break off the Society which I have with ſome infectious Wits, who perhaps will abhor me at my coming back. In ſhort, I believe I ought ſeriouſly to mind what is moſt eſſential. Anthimus *and* Philemon *are very fit to finiſh what* Theodorus *hath begun. So, I am now going to them; you know they have wiſh'd for my coming a long while.*

I beg that you will not impute my withdrawing my ſelf without any previous leave or notice, to a want of Friend-

ſhip for you, or of Dutifulneſs to my Mother. Far from this; I did it becauſe the Natural Affection which I ought to have for her, and you, is too violent. I dreaded the Conſequences of it in the performance of a Deſign which I was reſolved to fulfil, for fear of being wanting in that which I owe to God; but at laſt I perſwaded my ſelf, that as my Mother and you have a very great eſteem for the Perſons to whom I am now going, you will, both of you, forgive the omiſſion of a peice of Formality, which I could not keep, merely out of too deep a ſenſe of Love for you.

I did not dare write to my Mother at firſt; but I beſeech you, deareſt Cozen, perſwade her to admit of the Aſſurances of my Duty and Submiſſion: I know that, next to God, I owe all things to her. As for Theodorus, *I pray you to tell him, that I'll continually meditate on the Principles which he diſcover'd to me; and that I love Truth extremely. By this he'll eaſily know that I'll ſeldom be without thinking of him.*

Ariſt. What think you of all this, *Theodorus*?

Theod. If you would know, Sir, what I think of *Eraſtus*; I muſt needs tell you, that I never knew a more juſt and penetrating Mind, a purer and clearer Imagination, a ſweeter and more honourable Temper, a more upright and generous Heart; and in ſhort, that I never ſaw a more accompliſht young Man than *Eraſtus*.

As for his Conduct, if you blame any thing in it, do but Anſwer what his Letter ſays in his Juſtification: Finding himſelf here holden by Tyes that inſlave him, he breaks them publickly, not being able to get free otherwiſe. He is afraid of not being able to preſerve the Purity of his Imagination, the Freedom of his Mind, and the Love of True Good, among Perſons who uſe to take all Things upon Truſt without examining

mining the Truth, and who, by their impoſing Ways and infectious Behaviour, are continually like to make ſome ill Impreſſions on his Mind. You ſee that even ſome of his Relations perſecute and ſeduce him. They endeavour to bring him in to the World for their own Credit; and they would have him to become conſiderable there, that his Advancement may promote theirs, and his Glory reflect ſome upon them. But *Eraſtus* is convinc'd by the Strength of Reaſon, that Wealth, Pomp, and Greatneſs, diſorder the Minds of thoſe that enjoy them; he is alſo convinced of it by the Authority of Chriſt: Would you not have him be guided by his Light, and Faith? Would you have him graſp a Phantaſm that vaniſhes, court a Stage-Greatneſs, and feed himſelf up with Illuſions and Chimæra's? Either let them prove to him that he follows a falſe Light, and that Chriſt is a Seducer, or elſe let him alone.

Ariſt. Do not think, *Theodorus*, that I have the leaſt Thing to object againſt his Conduct; I will rather follow him than diſturb him in his Deſign: He is in the Right; I am fully convinced of it, not only by what we ſaid in our former Conferences; but alſo by what he ſaid to me Yeſterday, when I was come back from my Friend's. Would you have me give you ſome account of it?

Theod. You will oblige me; we are always very fond of knowing the laſt Words of thoſe that leave us.

Ariſt. *Eraſtus* never expreſt himſelf with more Eloquence and Happineſs of Thought: He told me, among other Things, that, Man is not only united to his own Body, but alſo to all thoſe that ſurround him; that our Paſſions diffuſe our Soul into all ſenſible Ob-

jects, as our Senſes diffuſe it through every part of the Body; and that thoſe who launch into the wide World, continually running after Riches, Pleaſures, and Honours, diſſipate and loſe themſelves by being diſperſt as it were out of themſelves.

While they fancy that they enlarge their own Being, they weaken themſelves; and become Slaves to thoſe whom they would command: And while they encreaſe their Power on the Bodies that ſurround them, they loſe that which they have on the Truth that penetrates them.

Let me conſider, ſaid he, how Man comes to be ſenſible. Out of his Brain certain Nerves are emitted, whoſe infinite number of Branches are diſperſt over all the Parts of his Body. Theſe Nerves, or Fibres, which correſpond to the Seat of the Soul, agitate her as ſoon as they are ſtirred; they diſperſe her through all the Parts into which they inſinuate themſelves; and whatſoever happens in the Body breaks her Quiet and diſturbs her.

Now let me examine the Condition which that Man is in who is led by his Paſſions, and faſten'd to every Thing. Out of his Heart ſome Bonds may in one ſenſe be ſaid to be emitted, and thence their ſtrings are diſperſt through all ſenſible Objects. Theſe Strings are no ſooner ſtirr'd by the Motion of thoſe Objects, but his Heart is alſo mov'd. If theſe Objects are remov'd at ſome diſtance, his Heart muſt follow, or be torn. In ſhort, his Soul diſperſes her ſelf by the Means of theſe Tyes through whatever ſurrounds him, juſt as ſhe diffuſes her ſelf by the Means of Nerves over every Part of the Body.

When a Man inconſiderately gives himſelf up to the Commerce of the World, the Tyes of his Heart faſten him

him to a Thouſand Objects which only ſerve to make him wretched; and if he be mad enough to have a real Love for thoſe Objects, or to be puffſt up with his new Greatneſs, he is (ſaid he to me) like thoſe who would be proud of a Dropſie, or of Wens or Bunches that ſwell their Body to a bigger Bulk than ordinary.

Do you think (continued he) that the Souls of Gigantic Men are greater than thoſe of other Men? They have, indeed, a larger Body, and can put a greater Maſs of Matter into Motion; but if you examine them well, you'll find that their Motions are more irregular. The very Horſes and Elephants are ſtronger than they and more bulky, and if theſe Men meaſur'd the Greatneſs of their Soul by that of their Body they would make themſelves univerſally ridiculous.

Yet it were a juſter Thing to meaſure the Greatneſs of the Soul by that of the Body, than by that of Riches and Honours. For, after all, our Body is more our own than our Wealth, and we are more united to it, than we are to our Clothes, our Houſe, or our Lands: How fooliſh and vain then are not Men when they pretend to grow greater by being diſperſt out of themſelves!

Truely (cry'd he) Imaginary Greatneſs makes Men become very miſerable Creatures. Every thing offends them; every thing diſturbs them; every thing holds them faſt. And can Men in a perpetual Hurry, and, as it were, wounded in every Part, be able to Think? Can they be able to cleave to Truth for which alone they are made, with which alone they can be nouriſh'd, and through which alone they can grow more wiſe and more happy? They are commonly mad, ſtupid, thoughtleſs Creatures, void of Light and Underſtanding.

Do you think (added he) that the Voluptuous, and thoſe who continually ſtrive to extend their Slavery by enlarging the Bounds of their Commands, do ſo much as know that they are not made for Bodies, nor for a Time, and that they are not on Earth barely to live there? Alas! they know nothing of this; they do not perceive that Bodies are inferiour to them, uncapable of acting on them, and altogether unworthy of their Love. As they have not yet felt the Sting of Death, they cannot ſtrictly be ſaid to know they ſhall dye. Their Tongues indeed ſay, they muſt; and they believe it; but they do not know it: They think they ſhall be no more, but they do not know they ſhall dye.

What vaſt difference is there not between ſeeing and ſeeing! 'Tis but a very little while ſince I know, that I am not made for Corporeal Beings, that the Figure of this World paſſeth away, that the true Good of Spirits is a Spiritual Good, and even ſince I know what it is to dye. Nay, as my Underſtanding is but ſmall, I have too been obliged to think with my utmoſt application to comprehend theſe Truths. Before this, I thought of Death what my Eyes diſcover'd to me of it, and ſcarce any thing more: And if I had not been in a greater Capacity of applying my ſelf to thinking than thoſe who are in the Hurry of Buſineſs or a hunting after Pleaſure, I muſt confeſs, I had not known what I believe is unknown to great Numbers of Men.

The application of the Mind produces Light and diſcovers Truth: The ſight of Truth gives perfection to the Mind, and regulates the Heart: Such an application is then neceſſary. But can a Man when he is pull'd and drawn on all ſides, ſtruck and wounded every where, thruſt back when he would get forwards,

wards, dragg'd forwards when he would go back, and continually diſturb'd and miſus'd; can ſuch a Man, I ſay, think with application? Can a Man who fears every thing, yet deſires, hopes for, and runs after every thing, think on what he does not ſee?

Truth is diſtant, and not ſenſible, nor is it a Good which we find our ſelves preſs'd to love: We muſt ſeek it, if we would find it; But we may ſtill put off the Search; for, it never wholly leaves us. On the contrary, Bodies cauſe themſelves to be felt every Moment, preſs us to love them, and continually oblige us to cleave to them, for they are tranſitory, and leave us as ſoon as they have tempted us. So, becauſe Opportunity when loſt is not eaſily recover'd, Men are quickly determin'd to enjoy them; but as for Truth, they put off from time to time the applying of themſelves to it, becauſe it never leaves them, nor cauſes it ſelf to be felt, and for that reaſon it does not preſs them to love it.

How happy are thoſe (added he) who wait for Eternity in Deſerts, and who, finding themſelves too weak to preſerve the Freedom of their Mind and the purity of their Imagination againſt the Efforts and Malignity of ſenſible Objects, have bravely broken off all their Bonds to be ſtrictly joyn'd to God! But how much to be pitied are not thoſe whom God calls to live in the Midſt of the World, to convert it; what Woes have they not to undergo! what Enemies to fight with! I tremble (ſaid he) when I think on't; yet with Chriſt's Help any Thing may be brought under.

Yet (continued he) do you think we are oblig'd to live amidſt the Hurry of the World? For my part, I do not ſee that God calls me to this. And indeed the Glories of the World dazzle me; my Imagnation grows

grows confus'd, my Mind diſſipates it ſelf, and I am diſperſt and out of my ſelf as ſoon as I do not keep a ſtrict Watch over my Actions.

As for you (ſaid he to me) you are ſtrong; you are not afraid of the World; your Imagination is firm and ſettled, and God has given you Grace to loath the World, after you had enjoyed its Pleaſures. I admire (added he skilfully, to make me reflect on my inward Miſery) how the Traces, which were imprinted on your Brain by ſenſible Objects, could ſo happily wear out; how the Paſſions, whoſe Impulſe you formerly follow'd, could be calm'd; and how the Commerce which you have had with the World, does not encreaſe and prompt Concupiſcence in you! As you have experienced, that the Figure of this World paſſeth away, you enjoy it as enjoying it not; for, a Man of your Senſe will not ſuffer himſelf to be deceived twice. But I alas! am ſo ſtupid, that I have no ſooner got out of a Snare but I fall into it again; and I am ſo inſenſible as to fancy my ſelf wholly free, while I am a Slave to my Paſſions. As ſoon as I have reſolv'd to get rid of ſome ill Habit, I fondly imagine I have really caſt it off; So that I am like a Patient who thinks he is perfectly cur'd, merely becauſe he paſſionately deſires to get out of Bed and go abroad.

While *Eraſtus* ſpoke thus, I felt within me what he ſaid of himſelf; and knew him to have that Firmneſs of Mind for which he commended me. This ſo deeply ſtruck me, and laid me open to my ſelf in ſo clear and lively a manner, that the State of my Soul at once affected me with Terrour and Pity; while on the other ſide *Eraſtus* ſeem'd to me ſo lovely and ingenious; and ſpoke to me in ſo ſweet and natural a manner, that I could not but give the deepeſt Attention imaginable to what

what he ſaid. But at laſt, after he had ſpoken ſome of thoſe Words which never come out of the Mouth but when the Heart is open, he lookt in my Face to read in my Eyes the Effect which they had produc'd in my Soul; and ſeeing me as I was then, his Countenance at once chang'd according to mine; his Speech fail'd him as mine did me; he open'd his Mouth, but was not able to utter a Word; and when we had gaz'd on each other a Moment more to know one another, our Diſorder encreas'd, and we were oblig'd to part.

This is part of what paſt between *Eraſtus* and my ſelf at our laſt Enterview; for I have not ſeen him to day; and, by the little I have now told you of it, you may believe that he has not only convinc'd my Reaſon, but alſo made himſelf Maſter of my Heart. Whenever I think on him, I, as it were, feel him drawing me along; but while he takes me with him, the things I leave call me back, and I loſe him. However, I do not loſe him for a long time, and I know very well what I ſhall do.

Theod. You ſurprize me much, *Ariſtarchus*. What! would you imitate *Eraſtus?* follow a young Man's Example? what will not your Friends ſay?

Ariſt. They may ſay what they will. 'Tis not after all that I would follow *Eraſtus*; for I ſhould be aſhamed to do it: But 'tis that *Eraſtus* is in the Path in which I would tread, becauſe I know 'tis the beſt. I own that I have a particular Love for him, and the Example he ſhows me makes me reſolve to do what I think I ought to do: But I follow the Dictates of my Reaſon, I obey the Goſpel, and walk in the Way that leads me whither I would go; though Children or Mad-men went before me, I ought not to go out of it; for

for when a Man hath Buſineſs, he goes along without minding who beſides him walks the Streets.

I have laviſh'd the beſt half of my Life in the Hurry of Buſineſs, and the Diverſions which Worldly Men uſually take. All my former Studies have only ſerv'd to pervert my Underſtanding; I did read only in order to make a Figure in the World, to make my ſelf fit for Converſation, and to gain the Name of a Wit and a Man of Learning; ſo that I hardly know any thing of the Chriſtian Religion and Morals, but what I have heard you ſay of them

Is it not time then I ſhould look to my ſelf, and ſeriouſly minding what is moſt eſſential, repent me of my former diſorderly Courſe of Life? I had promiſed *Eraſtus* to ſtudy the Holy Scripture with him; I'll keep my Word to him; his Retirement ought not to make me forbear it; for, that ſort of Study is moſt proper in a Retirement. In ſhort, had not I a mind to endeavour, as much as I can, wholly to convert my Friend, I ſhould not a little ſurprize *Eraſtus*; for I then would be before him where he is a going. But I hope to ſurprize him otherwiſe; perhaps I ſhall not go by my ſelf to meet him there: My Friend's Heart is chang'd; and as 'tis difficult he ſhould be able to lead a Chriſtian Life in the ſight of the Libertines, with whom he formerly kept Company, who would continually perſecute him, I believe 'twill be no hard matter to make him reſolve to fly to a Retirement.

Theod. You are in the Right, *Ariſtarchus*; I adviſe you to relate to your Friend what paſs'd between you and *Eraſtus*, juſt as you told it me now, and to give him an account of the Deſign you have to follow him. If he ſincerely deſires to alter his Courſe of Life, I am ſure he wiſhes for ſome Place to which he may retire: For

For 'tis likely, he does not find himſelf arm'd with a Reſolution ſtrong enough to conquer the Shame which thoſe who follow Chriſt are put to by the World. But your Overture, backt with your Example, will probably make him reſolve to fly to ſome dark Retreat.

The Thing, in doing of which a Man who is in great Reputation in the World finds moſt difficulty, is in reſolving to paſs for a Fool or Mad-man the reſt of his Life: But let that Man think that he forſakes the World and follows ſuch a Friend as you, and then his Imagination will not ſo much diſturb his Reaſon. For our Imagination is uſually comforted by Examples; and if on one ſide it fancies that ſome Men will laugh at what we are going to do, it remembers at the ſame time that thoſe Scoffers will be diſtant and are now nothing to us.

Your Friend who ſo often laugh'd at thoſe whom he now would imitate, beſt knows how hard a Thing it is to live among Worldly Men, and not do as they do. He has experienc'd that thoſe who would lead a godly, righteous, and ſober Life, muſt ſuffer Perſecution. He has not forgot how he has uſed others, and perhaps cannot reſolve to condemn himſelf, in leading a new ſort of Life among his old Acquaintance.

Thus you'll doubtleſs eaſe him very much, if you entreat him to follow your Example; and this will certainly prevail with him, if, as you ſay, he intends to change his Life.

Ariſt. I even believe, *Theodorus*, that neither he nor I can live in the Hurry of the World, without running the danger of being undone. The Pleaſures which we have enjoyed, and the Honours which have been pay'd us, have impreſt on our Imagination ſome Traces that repreſent them, and which continually

ſoliciting

ſolliciting us might ſurprize and pervert us at laſt.

Theod. 'Tis true, *Ariſtarchus*: We need but taſte a while of a Pleaſure to become a Slave to it; and we cannot abide to expoſe our ſelves to be laught at. When the Imagination has been contaminated, the leaſt matter diſorders it: So thoſe who have formerly given themſelves up to their Pleaſures, ought to deny themſelves many Things which other Men may be allow'd to injoy. And when our Reputation runs too great a danger, we naturally model our ſelves according to the Spirit and Ways of the World: So that we ought to be, as it were, hidden, if we would live according to the Light of Reaſon and the Goſpel.

When we are alone, we take what Countenance or Poſture we pleaſe; but when we are in Company, we loſe that ſort of Freedom; becauſe the Preſence of others naturally ſpreads on our Face an Air ſuitable to the Quality and to the Diſpoſition of Mind of the Perſons that ſpeak to us.

The ſame may be ſaid of our Conduct; we live as we pleaſe when we are alone; but we are, as it were, oblig'd to do as others do, and follow their Maxims when we run too great a Riſque of being laugh'd at, and fear the Cenſures of too many People.

We were made to live in Society one with another; And the Natural Union which we have with Men, is now ſtronger and ſtricter than that which we have with God. So that we often ſwerve from Truth, and from Juſtice, out of meer Complaiſance. We offend God rather than diſoblige our Worldly Acquaintance; and prefer their Applauſe, to the Teſtimony of our Conſcience; fearing leſs the ſecret Checks of our Reaſon, and the terrible Threats of the Living God, than the ſilly Laughter of Worldly Men.

Thus,

Thus, *Ariſtarchus*, you juſtly believe that the Ways of the World might lead both you and your Friend aſtray. Therefore ſtedfaſtly follow your Light; and retire to ſome Solitude to breath an uncorrupted Air; ſhun an Enemy whom you fear to engage; break the Bonds that detain you in Captivity; but break them publickly and with Noiſe; that having made your ſelf ridiculous in the Eyes of carnal Men, you may be aſham'd to appear before them, and that your Imagination may no more urge you to look back, but rather that it may excite you to be private, that you may enjoy the Freedom you deſire.

A private Receſs chiefly befits thoſe who are oblig'd to mortifie their Affections and lead a moſt penitent Life, thoſe who are like your Friend, whom you have deſcrib'd to me as a Perſon who us'd blindly to follow all the Dictates of his Paſſions: For, 'tis neceſſary that thoſe who have wallow'd in Pleaſure ſhould live after the ſtricteſt and moſt Self-denying way; and the continual Humiliation practis'd in Religious Houſes is the ſureſt Means to pull down the Pride of the Mind.

Endeavour, then, to ſave your Friend, and, with him, alſo your ſelf. Be ſure to make uſe of all theſe Arguments, to prevail with him to forſake the World; and, in ſhort, help and ſupport one another. The Advice which I now give you, does not indeed ſquare very well with the common Sentiments of Friendſhip; but I dare ſay, you will give me leave to wiſh you that which I know is your True Good; ſince, though I ſeem to loſe you for a Time, it is only that I may find my ſelf again united to you, by Tyes as powerful as God himſelf, and as laſting as Eternity.

F I N I S.

23 OC 62

Meditations

Concerning

HUMILITY

AND

REPENTANCE.

Written in *French*

By *F. MALEBRANCHE.*

LONDON,

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BRITISH MUSEUM

TO THE

READER.

THE Deſign of the following Meditations is to humble the proud Soul, and to incline it to Repentance.

Man is ſo mean a thing, that the very Knowledge of him is Naturally attended with Contempt; and he is ſo corrupt and degenerate, that 'tis impoſſible to avoid hating him, when we conſider him as he is in himſelf, and without relation to the Great Reſtorer of all things. I ſhall endeavour to repreſent him as a Creature, as the Son of a Sinful Father, and a Sinner himſelf; and I am perſwaded that this will be ſuffi-

cient to inſpire us with juſt and becoming ſentiments of our ſelves.

If thoſe who have had a lively and ſerious ſenſe both of their Miſeries and Obligations, did ever afterwards remain dead to Pleaſures, uncapable of Vanity, and thoroughly convinc'd of Eſſential Truths; theſe Meditations would be proper only for ſuch as are juſt beginning to ſet about the Work of their Converſion. But I think I may adventure to aſſure the Reader that they will be profitable to all that ſhall be willing to make uſe of them; not ſo much by enlarging their Knowledge as by fixing their Thoughts on ſuch things as they would not otherwiſe conſider with due application.

23 OC 62

Of MAN,

Conſidered as a

CREATURE.

The Firſt Conſideration.

MAN, in himſelf, is but a meer Nothing: His very Being depends abſolutely on the Will of God; and if God ſhould only ceaſe to will his Exiſtence, he would at the ſame time ceaſe to be. For, the Power that God has to annihilate his Creatures, does not conſiſt in willing their Non-exiſtence, ſince *Nothing* includes no Good, and cannot be the Object of a Poſitive Act of Gods Will. But he is able to deſtroy them meerly by * ceaſing to will that they ſhould continue to be; for ſince the Creatures do not contain all Goodneſs, they are not neceſſarily and indiſpenſably lovely; and God himſelf includes all that Perfection and Goodneſs that is in them.

* *Not that God can ceaſe to will what he once did will, ſince his Will is Eternal and Unchangeable: But he might have willed from all Eternity, and by an Unchangeable Will, that I ſhould exiſt to this very moment, and no longer.*

The Elevation of the Soul to GOD.

O GOD, make me continually ſenſible of my dependance on thy Almighty Will, my Being is thine, and the duration of my Being, or my Time, is alſo thine. How great then is my Injuſtice! My Being is in a manner the Being of God; and my Time is properly God's Time; for I am more God's than my own, or rather, I am not at all my own, nor do I ſubſiſt by my ſelf; and yet I neither live nor employ God's Time but for my ſelf. Alas! how do I deceive my ſelf! O my God, all that Time which I do not employ for thee, I cannot be ſaid to employ it for my ſelf; and I can neither ſeek nor find my ſelf, but by ſeeking and finding thee.

The Second Conſideration.

MAN, in himſelf is nothing but Weakneſs and Infirmity. He cannot deſire Good in general, but by vertue of a continual Impreſſion from God, who does inceſſantly turn and force him towards himſelf; for God is that *indefinite* and univerſal Good, which comprehends all other good things. Man is alſo not able by himſelf to deſire any Particular Good; but only ſo far as he is capable of determining the Impreſſion which he receives from God.

Man is utterly unable to do Good, but through a new ſupply of Grace, which illuminates him by its Light, and attracts him by its Sweetneſs; for, by himſelf, he is only able to Sin.

He could not ſo much as move his Hand, if God did not communicate to his Blood and to the Aliment

by

by which he is nouriſhed, a part of that Motion which he has ſpread through the whole Maſs of Matter, and afterwards determine the Motion of the Spirits according to the different Acts of the impotent Will of Man, by guiding them towards the Pipes of the Nerves, which the Man himſelf does not ſo much as know.

A Man indeed may deſire to move his Hand, but 'tis God alone that can, and knows how to move it. For if Man did not eat, and if that which he eats were not digeſted, and agitated in his Entrails and Heart, to be afterwards turn'd to Blood and Spirits, without expecting the Orders of his Will, or if theſe Spirits were not guided by a knowing Hand, through a Million of different Tubes, it would be in vain for Man, who is ignorant of his own Body, to deſire to put it into Motion.

The Elevation of the Soul to GOD.

O GOD, let me never forget that without thee I can neither deſire nor do any thing, not even ſo much as move the ſmalleſt Member of my Body. Thou, O God, art all my Strength, in thee do I place all my Hope and Confidence. Do thou cover me with ſhame and confuſion, and fill me with inward remorſe, if ever I ſhall be guilty of ſo much Ingratitude and Preſumption, as to lift up that Arm againſt thee, which owes even that Motion, which I ſeem to give it, rather to the invincible Power of thy Will, than to the feeble Efforts of mine.

The Third Conſideration.

MAN, in himſelf, is nothing but Darkneſs. He does not produce in himſelf thoſe Ideas by which he perceives all things, for he is not his own Light; and ſince Philoſophy teaches me that the Objects cannot form in the Mind thoſe Ideas by which they are repreſented, it muſt be acknowledg'd that 'tis God alone who enlightens us. He is that great Sun which penetrates all things, and fills them with his Light, and that Great Maſter who inſtructs every Man that comes into the World. All that we ſee we ſee in him, and in him we may ſee all that we are capable of ſeeing. For ſince God includes the Ideas or likeneſſes of all Beings, and we alſo are in him, for *in him we live, move, and have our Being*, 'tis certain that we ſee or may ſucceſſively ſee all Beings in him. He is that intelligible World in which all Spirits are, and in which they perceive the Material World, which is neither viſible, nor intelligible by it ſelf.

The Elevation of the Soul to GOD.

O *GOD, to whom I owe all my Thoughts, thou Light of my Soul and of my Eyes, without whom the Sun himſelf in all his Glory would be inviſible to me, make me ever ſenſible of thy Power and my Weakneſs, thy Greatneſs and my Meanneſs, thy Light and my Obſcurity, and in a word, what thou art, and what I am.*

Thy

The Fourth Conſideration.

MAN, by himſelf, is inſenſible, and in a manner Dead. The Body cannot act upon its own Soul. A Sword indeed may pierce me, and cauſe ſome alteration in the Fibres of my Fleſh, but I perceive clearly that it cannot make me ſuffer Pain. A harmonious ſound may firſt ſhake the Air, and then the Fibres of my Brain; but my Soul cannot be ſhaken by it. My Soul is far above my Body, neither is there any neceſſary Relation between thoſe two Parts of my ſelf. On the other hand I find that Pleaſure, Pain, and all my other Senſations, are produced in me without any dependency upon me, and oftentimes even in ſpight of all my endeavours to the contrary. And therefore I cannot doubt but that there is a Being different from my Soul, which inſpires it with Life and Senſation, and I know no other Power but that of God which is able to act thus upon his Creatures. 'Tis he then who is the Soveraign of the Soul, and can only puniſh or reward it.

The Elevation of the Soul to GOD.

O GOD, ſince I live but by thee, make me alſo to live only for thee, and may I be inſenſible of all things but the love of thee. O God, make me ſenſible that none of all the Creatures can either hurt me, or do me good: That there is not one among them all that can make me feel either Pleaſure or Pain: That I ought neither to fear nor love them: That thou alone, O my God, deſerveſt both my love and fear; becauſe thou art only

only able to reward me with the Joys of thy Elect, or puniſh me with the Torments of the Reprobate.

O my chaſte Delight, thou Author of Nature, and cauſe of all the Pleaſures that I feel, thou knoweſt that theſe very Pleaſures inſtead of uniting me to thee, who alone canſt make me ſenſible of them, chain me like a wretched Slave to the Earth; Grant, I beſeech thee, that I may never more be ſo violently aſſaulted by them in the uſe of thoſe things which thou haſt forbidden. Scatter a holy dread, and a wholeſome bitterneſs on the Objects of my Senſes, that I may be able to diſengage my ſelf from them; and let me feel in thy love thoſe unutterable delights of thy Grace which may unite me cloſer to thee. Grant that the ſweetneſs which I taſte in loving thee may augment my love; and that my love may renew the ſenſe that I have of thy ſweetneſs. May I grow thus in Charity, till at laſt being full of thee, and empty of my ſelf and every thing elſe, I may re-enter, and loſe my ſelf in thee, O my All, as in the Fountain of all Beings. May that Word, God ſhall be All in All, *be entirely accompliſhed on me; and may I find my ſelf and all things elſe in thee.*

Of MAN,

Considered as the

Son of a Sinful Father.

WE have seen in the fore-going Considerations, that Man, in himself, is a meer Nothing, that he is made up of Weakness, Infirmity and Darkness, that he receives Life, Sense and Motion, continually from God, that he owes to him his whole Being and all his Faculties. And therefore he is certainly under the highest Obligations of Love and Gratitude to God, since he depends so absolutely upon him, as he is a Creature: But if we consider him as the Son of a Sinful Father, and as a Sinner himself, we shall find so great a multiplicity of essential and indispensable Duties which he owes to God, and at the same time so great a want of Power, and so much unworthiness to perform them, that so far is he from being able to do his Duty, that even his Performances would be rejected, if Christ our Mediator had not merited Grace for him by his Death. We must not then consider Man only as the Son of a Sinful Father, and as he is a Sinner himself; but we ought always to look upon him in Jesus Christ, in whom alone we are able to please God.

The

The Fifth Conſideration.

MAN conſidered as the Son of a Sinful Father is a Reprobate, a Child of Wrath, whom his Father will not ſee, and who ſhall never ſee his Father; for he is a Child whom his Father does not love, nor will he be belov'd by ſuch a Child.

God lov'd *Adam* before his Fall, and deſir'd to be lov'd by him: He was willing to communicate himſelf to him, and to be in a manner familiarly acquainted with him. He call'd to him, as he now does to us, but with a much clearer and more intelligible Voice, I am thy Good, make me the only Object of thy Love and Hope. At theſe words his Senſes and Paſſions were ſilent, nor was he diſturb'd by that confus'd and flattering noiſe, which ariſes in us even againſt our Wills, and boldly oppoſes the dictates of Truth in our Souls. God ſpoke to him, and he did not murmur: God inlighten'd him, and he was freed from Darkneſs: God commanded him, and he made no reſiſtance. The Pleaſure and Joy which he felt in ſeeing himſelf favour'd and protected by a God that would never forſake him, if he did not firſt leave him, kept him united to his Lord by Bonds that were never like to be broken.

God did not force *Adam* to love him by preingaging Pleaſures, becauſe he would have him merit his Reward more ſpeedily. He left him to the determination of his own Free-will, that he might have power to chuſe for himſelf; and he beſtow'd a due meaſure of Knowledge and Underſtanding upon him, that he might be enabled to make a good choice. Thus Man perceiv'd clearly what he was to do to obtain ſolid

and

and perfect Happineſs, and nothing could hinder him from performing that as long as he pleaſed.

But he was not ſeparated from himſelf, and the conſideration of himſelf fill'd him with a certain Joy and Pleaſure, which made him in a manner *feel* that his Natural Perfection was the cauſe of his preſent Felicity; for Joy ſeems to proceed naturally and abſolutely from a view of our own Perfections, becauſe we do not always think on him who operates always in us. Beſides, *Adam* had a Body, and could, when he pleas'd, reliſh ſuch Pleaſures in the actual enjoyment of Senſible Things, as made him *feel* that Corporeal Things were his Good. I did not make choice of this Expreſſion without Reaſon; for he *knew* that God was his Good, but did not *feel* it, becauſe he *felt* no preingaging Pleaſures in the performance of his Duty; and on the other ſide he *felt* that the Objects of his Senſes were his Good, but did not *know* them to be ſo, becauſe that which *is* not cannot be *known*.

When *Adam felt* that Senſible Objects were his Good, or imagin'd that the cauſe of his Happineſs was in himſelf; when he taſted Pleaſure in the uſe of Corporeal Things, or rejoyc'd at the ſight of his own Perfections, his Senſations obſcur'd the clear perceptions of his Mind by which he *knew* that God was his Good: For *Senſation* confounds *Knowledge*, becauſe it modifies the Soul, and divides its capacity. Thus *Adam* who perceiv'd all theſe things clearly, ought to have been perpetually upon his guard: He ſhould have reſiſted the allurements of the Pleaſures which he felt, leaſt he ſhould be diſtracted by them, and betray'd into unavoidable deſtruction: He ſhould have ſtood firm in the preſence of God, and depended abſolutely on his Light. But relying too much upon himſelf,

ſelf, he ſuffered his Underſtanding to be darkened by the reliſh of Senſual Pleaſures, or by a confus'd Senſation of a preſumptuous Joy; and being thus inſenſibly diſunited from him who was his true Strength, and the ſource of all his Happineſs, he was juſtly puniſhed by the revolt of thoſe Senſes to which he had voluntarily ſubmitted. By which Puniſhment it ſeem'd that God had utterly forſaken him, and that he would never any more vouchſafe to accept of his Love, and had given him the Material World to be the Object of his Knowledge and Affection.

The Curſe of God that was pronounc'd againſt *Adam*, is fall'n upon all the Poſterity of that rebellious Father. God has withdrawn his preſence from the World, and inſtead of communicating himſelf to it, does continually thruſt it farther from him. We ſuffer Pain when we ſeek God, but we feel all ſorts of Pleaſures when being weary with following him through ſuch rough and troubleſome ways, we joyn our ſelves to his Creatures. The World does not clearly *perceive* that it ought to love God, and that he alone ought to be the proper Object of its Affection; but it *feels* in a very lively and alluring manner, that it ſhould love ſomething elſe beſides him; and conſequently it does not love God, but flies from him continually, and even is unable to turn to him. It was ſhamefully driven out of Paradiſe in the Perſon of *Adam*, it has forfeited its Title to God, and loſt the hope of Heaven and Happineſs: It is accurſt and eternally accurſt. It is a Crime to wiſh well to it, becauſe it is and for ever ſhall be at enmity with God. And even it cannot wiſh well to it ſelf without doing it ſelf an injury: For by wiſhing well to it ſelf it endeavours to break the eſtabliſht Order of Things, it

provokes

provokes the God of Order, and increaſes the Hatred and Indignation of him to whom Vengeance belongs. What can it thus do? Shall it yield it ſelf up to Fury and Deſpair, and ſeek to be annihilated becauſe it cannot enjoy God? But annihilation it ſelf is perhaps a Favour which it does not deſerve, and therefore ſhall not obtain. We may indeed kill, but cannot annihilate our ſelves; and if Death were an annihilation, it would not be in the power of Man to put an end to his Life. What muſt we do then, and what courſe muſt we take to regain our loſt Happineſs? We muſt humble our ſelves before God, we muſt hate our ſelves mortally as the Children of *Adam*, and neither love nor eſteem our ſelves or others but in and through *Chriſt*, in whom all things ſubſiſt, and by whom we are reconcil'd to God.

The Elevation of the Soul to GOD.

O *GOD, let me always be ſenſible of the wretchedneſs of my condition, as a Son of fallen* Adam; *that as ſuch I am not worthy to think on thee, or to adore and love thee; but am a Child of Darkneſs, a Sojourner in a dry and parched Land, baniſhed from thy Preſence, deſpiſed and rejected by thee, and Heir to thy Eternal Malediction, and that I have no right to complain of thy juſt rigour either to thy ſelf, or to thy Creatures. Grant that I may humble my ſelf before thee, and abhor my ſelf in this condition in which I am incapable of loving thee, and that I may with an humble Faith fly to thy Son, who has reſtored us to Peace, and by whom we have free acceſs to thee, to render that which we owe to thee, and to ask of thee that which thou ſeemeſt to owe to our Miſery. O Jeſus, my Deliverer,*

perfect

perfect thy own work, ſtrip me of the old, *and cloth me with the* new *Man. I will not henceforth love any thing in my ſelf, but what thou haſt put into me, or rather I will only love thee in my Heart. Thou art all my Wiſdom, and all my Strength; be thou alſo all my Glory, and all my Felicity.*

The Sixth Conſideration.

MAN conſidered as the Son of a Father who revolted againſt God, is a miſerable, weak and tender Child, deſtitute both of Cloaths and Arms, expos'd to the injuries of the Weather, and given up as a prey to the fury of wild Beaſts.

Adam, in the State of Innocence, was ſtrong and mighty, he was ſeated in an inacceſſible place, and under the protection of God; nothing durſt aſſault him, and he was able to reſiſt every thing. After his Fall all the Creatures made War upon him, and he was not able to reſiſt any of them. All the Poſterity of this rebellious Parent do not only partake of his Sin, but alſo of his Puniſhment. Let us illuſtrate this Truth by diſtinct Ideas.

'Tis Pleaſure that rules with a Soveraign and Arbitrary Power in the Heart of Man, eſpecially when his Reaſon is blinded: For, Pleaſure is the Natural Character of good, and Men cannot forbear loving that which is good. And therefore Pleaſure is, as it were, the weight of the Soul which inclines it by degrees, and at laſt pulls it forcibly towards the Object that is the true or ſeeming Cauſe of that Senſation, tho' Reaſon may oppoſe it for ſome time. *Adam* before his Fall did not feel thoſe preventing and preingaging Pleaſures,

Pleaſures, which afterwards conſtrained him to place his Affection on the Objects of his Senſes: He enjoy'd a perfect liberty, and a full power to diſpoſe of himſelf: He was neither forced nor enticed; but, of his own accord, and according to the meaſure of Light that was in him, he inclined to love his real good. But together with his Innocence he loſt his perfect Liberty. Not being longer Maſter of Pleaſure, nor able to ſtop the Senſation of it, he was at laſt inſlaved by it, and both his Underſtanding and Affections were ſubdu'd under the tyranical dominion of Terreſtrial Things. He became altogether Earthly, a Slave to Sin, ſubject to Death, and to a thouſand other Miſeries which it would be needleſs to deſcribe.

We are all born, like our firſt Father, chained to the Earth: For we do all Naturally feel Pleaſure in the uſe of ſenſible things which are the good of the Body, but we don't Naturally feel any good in thoſe things which contribute to the perfection of the Mind: And it is this irregularity of our Pleaſures that diſorders our Affections, and is the moſt fruitful ſource of all our Miſeries.

And while we are in this wretched condition, we cannot by our ſelves draw near to God, neither are we able to find in the Natural Order of things, a Creature that is noble and pure enough, and ſufficiently elevated by the dignity of its Perſon, and by the greatneſs of its Merits, to reconcile us to God: But we find all that we want or can deſire in the Chriſtian Religion.

This Holy Religion does continually exhort us to Mortification, Reſignation, to a Circumciſion of the heart, and leſſening of the weight of Sin; and it gives us alſo a Mediator, by whoſe Merit we receive the weight

of Grace, that victorious delight, *which passeth all understanding*, and which draws us to God, notwithstanding all the resistance of our Passions and of the Pleasures of our Senses. For these two things, the privation of Pleasures, and the delectation of Grace, are absolutely necessary to us in a state of Sin. We must by a continual Mortification of our Senses and Passions, diminish that weight of Concupiscence which draws us to the Earth; and ask of God through our Mediator Christ Jesus the delectation of his Grace, without which all our endeavours to diminish the weight of Sin would be in vain, for it would still weigh us down; and the least weight of Sin would infallibly draw us along with it, and keep us as it were fastened to the Earth, and under the dominion of our Enemies.

The Elevation of the Soul to GOD.

O GOD, *let me never forget that I am an unhappy exile from my Native Countrey; that I am in the midst of my Enemies who are still plotting my Destruction; that the Air of the World is pestilential and poysonous; and that all the Creatures draw me to themselves, and divert me from thee. Make me sensible O God, that my Domestick Enemies are most dangerous; that I ought to fear my self more than the World, and the World more than the Devil; and that among so many Enemies I have no strength to defend my self, no arms to resist them, nor understanding to discern them. Inspire me with a deep sense of all my Infirmities, Wounds and Miseries, of which I have yet but a very imperfect knowledge.*

O JESUS, *I ſee nothing in my ſelf but weakneſs, when I look upon my ſelf without thee; but when I feel thee with me, I find my ſelf endued with an invincible ſtrength.* Through thee will we puſh down our Enemies; and through thy Name will we tread them under that riſe up againſt us. For I will not truſt in my Bow; neither ſhall my Sword ſave me. *O thou derided, buffeted, and ſcourged* Jeſus, *thou that waſt covered with Spittle and Blood, and humbled even to the Death, confound my Pride and Senſuality. Drive all my Domeſtick Enemies out of my Heart, by the Vertue of thy Sufferings, and by the Merit of thy Holy Reſignation: Cloth thy ſelf in Purple, O my King, put on thy Crown of Thorns, and take thy Reed in thy hand; come to my aſſiſtance, and judge and ſubdue all my Enemies; make the Earth tremble before thee when thou aſcendeſt the Throne of thy Croſs; ſlay Death it ſelf, and for ever deſtroy the Pride of Sin. Carry me up with thee, O my God, and unite me to thee; Crucifie and ſacrifice me with thee, that I may partake of that Power which is ſo terrible to my Home-bred Enemies, to the World, and to Hell it ſelf.*

Of MAN,

Considered as a

SINNER.

The Seventh Consideration.

IT is extreamly difficult to represent the inward Dispositions of Mind that a Sinner ought to have; for neither the lowest humiliation, nor the highest self-abhorrence, nor even annihilation it self, are sutable to so mean wicked and empty a thing, or rather *nothing*. Annihilation would be a Blessing to a Sinner who is reserved for the Wrath that is to come: And he cannot abhor himself as he ought, for 'tis God alone that can hate him as much as he deserves.

Man as a Child of *Adam* is indeed a Reprobate, but he is not subject to the Punishment of the Damned; he ought indeed to live in perpetual sorrow, as being deprived of his soveraign good, but he does not deserve the extremity of Torments. The Children of a Criminal may be justly deprived of all the Favours which their Father received, but they do not deserve an equal Punishment. God may with Justice withdraw his Presence from the Sons of *Adam*; he may deny them his particular Favours, and refuse to be their

their Recompence; and even may, if he pleaſes, annihilate them, ſince they are his Creatures. But it does not ſeem agreeable to the Divine Juſtice to puniſh them with the utmoſt ſeverity, only becauſe they are the unhappy Children of a rebellious Father.

But the Caſe is altered when we conſider Man as a Sinner himſelf: And God might very reaſonably exert all his Wiſdom and Power to ſatisfie his Juſtice, if the Sinner were capable of being made the Object of the entire Vengeance of an angry God. For ſince the Greatneſs of Offences is meaſured by the Dignity of the Perſon that is offended, 'tis plain that every Offence that is committed againſt God is infinite, and deſerves an infinite Puniſhment, if Man were capable of ſuffering it.

Thus a Sinner conſidered without Chriſt, is ſomething worſe yet than a Damned Soul that is conſider'd with the Satisfaction of Chriſt. For if we conſider the Satisfaction of Chriſt, it is not neceſſary that damned Souls ſhould ſuffer according to their utmoſt capacity of ſuffering. Neither, in effect, do the Damned ſuffer all that they are able to endure; for their Puniſhment is unequal as well as their Guilt, tho' their capacity of ſuffering be the ſame, and they deſerve to ſuffer to the utmoſt all that they are able to bear. And therefore the condition of a Sinner without Chriſt, is more deplorable than that of the Damn'd; for he is a Blemiſh to the Beauty of the Univerſe, and overturns the eſtabliſhed Order of Things as much as 'tis poſſible he ſhould overturn it.

Such a Sinner is even more worthy of Hatred than all the Damn'd and Devils together; for the Death of Chriſt being ſufficient to ſupply the defects of the ſatisfaction which the Damn'd make to the Juſtice of

God, that Sacred Juſtice is fully ſatisfied, and God is Glorified in the Puniſhment of the Damned notwithſtanding all their Malice and Spight; and even their Malice it ſelf, as the due reward of their Sins, ſerves to glorifie the Divine Juſtice: But a Sinner without Chriſt is a Monſter whom God neither can nor will endure; he is not capable of being comprehended in any order, neither of Mercy nor of Juſtice. There is nothing that is Good in ſuch a Sinner: 'Tis impoſſible to think on him without horrour, and thoſe who love Order, that inviolable Law of Spiritual Motion, can ſee nothing more worthy hatred and deteſtation than ſuch a Creature.

I can neither hate nor humble my ſelf enough as I am a Sinner. Even my Repentance deſerves to be rejected; for my Groans and Tears ſerve only to renew the remembrance of my Offences. In vain do I lift up my voice to Heaven; God hears not the Cries of Sinners; he laughs at their Calamities, and delights in their juſt Puniſhments. As a *Creature*, God hears me; as a *Son of Adam*, he deſpiſes me; but as a *Sinner* he cannot think on me without making me the Object of his moſt rigorous Juſtice, and puniſhing me according to the utmoſt extent of my capacity of ſuffering. How miſerable then is the condition of a Sinner! But let us not any longer conſider him without a Redeemer.

The Elevation of the Soul to GOD.

O *Jeſus, who cameſt into the World not to call the Righteous, but Sinners to Repentance; who didſt take upon thy ſelf all the marks of a Sinner, and condeſcend to be look'd upon as a Sinner, and as a Friend to Publicans and Sinners; thou whoſe ardent deſire it was to*

ſuffer

ſuffer for Sinners, and by the hands of Sinners, a Death which was appointed for the vileſt Sinners; O Jeſus, the Saviour of Sinners, be thou my ſhield to protect me againſt the Arrows of the Wrath of God; and ſtop the Arm of thy Father, which is ready to fall heavily upon me. Joyn thy Groans to mine, and mingle thy Tears with mine, that they may not any longer be the object of the ſcorn and abomination of my God. I do not ask thee to raiſe me from the ground, to wipe away my Tears, or to reſtore my firſt Robes; I am not in a ſtate of Innocence, and deſire not to live but in Sorrow and Humiliation. Yes, Lord, I will remain proſtrate on the ground, with my Face cover'd with Duſt and Tears, and thus together with thee bear that ſhame and confuſion which I juſtly deſerve for my offences.

The Eighth Conſideration.

THE Condition of Man, as a Child of *Adam*, and even though we conſider him as redeem'd by Chriſt, does neceſſarily require a ſeparation and abſtinence from all the Pleaſures of Senſe, and Objects of Concupiſcence; for every Child of *Adam*, how righteous and holy ſoever he may be ſuppos'd to be, does always feel a weight that draws him to the Earth, and counter-ballances the effort of the weight of Grace upon his Soul. Now ſince the weight of Grace does not depend on us, and acts ſo much the more vigorouſly upon us, as the weight of Concupiſcence is leſs; 'tis plain that all Mankind is under a very ſtrict obligation to diminiſh the laſt of theſe weights, by carefully avoiding ſenſual Pleaſures, which Naturally incline us to the love of thoſe Objects that ſeem to cauſe them,

and by ſo doing ſtir up and ſtrengthen the motions of Concupiſcence in us.

Beſides, Mortification and a depriving our ſelves of Worldly Pleaſures are not only uſeful to cooperate with Grace, and remove ſuch things as might obſtruct its efficacy, but are even many times neceſſary qualifications to deſerve Grace; and in all appearance the ſhorteſt way to obtain it, nor do they ever fail of doing it when they proceed from a Motion of the Spirit of God, and are practiſed with due perſeverance.

When we conſider that an unchangeable Order is the Eſſential Rule of the Will of God, we perceive clearly that Sinners are indiſpenſably obliged to ſuch a Privation and Mortification; for 'tis plain that Order requires the Puniſhment of Sinners.

Every Man ought to wiſh with a certain Holy Perſon, *Either to ſuffer, or to dye*; or rather with another, *Not to dye till he has ſuffered much.* For every one who loves Order, who prefers the Will of God before his own, who has regard to the Beauty of the Univerſe, not that viſible Beauty which is the Object of our Senſes, but the intelligible Beauty which can be only perceived by our Minds; every one I ſay, that conſiders himſelf as a part of the Works of God, and who places not his chief end in himſelf, nor thinks it his Duty to love himſelf more than God, ought to conform himſelf to the Will of his *All*. He ought to undertake the quarrel of God, and inſpir'd with a holy zeal for the ſatisfaction of his Juſtice, exercile a neceſſary ſeverity againſt himſelf; a ſeverity which will reſtore him to a ſtate of Order, ſo much the more quickly as he ſhall exerciſe it more voluntarily: For, if the puniſhment of Sin were not voluntary it would neceſſarily be eternal.

If

If we conſider'd that Pleaſure is a recompence, which God alone is capable of producing in us; and that he has obliged himſelf by the Order of Nature, which is nothing elſe but the Eternal Decrees of his Will, to make us feel Pleaſure, as often as the Bodies that ſurround us ſhall produce in our Body ſuch motions as are uſeful for its preſervation: If we conſidered this, I ſay, we ſhould be fully convinced that it is an abominable and ſhameful impudence to make uſe of the unchangeableneſs of the Decrees of a Juſt God to oblige him to reward us, at the ſame time that we deſerve to be puniſhed as Sinners, and even for thoſe Crimes which we are then actually committing againſt God. For it is certainly a thing that cannot be reflected on without horrour and amazement; *viz.* that we make the goodneſs of God favour our Paſſions, and in a manner force the God of order to reward diſorder.

But if we conſider on the other ſide, that Pain is a puniſhment which God alone is capable of inflicting on us, and that he has obliged himſelf, by the ſame order of Nature, to make us ſenſible of Pain as often as the Bodies which ſurround us ſhall produce ſuch motions in our Bodies as are contrary to its preſervation; we then can no longer doubt but that a Sinner who willingly ſubmits to the order of Juſtice, and makes uſe of the immutability of the Divine Will, only that he may be re-eſtabliſh'd in a ſtate of order, who, if I may be allowed to uſe that expreſſion, reconciles God with God, and natural order with eſſential and neceſſary order, and who, knowing himſelf to be a Sinner, obliges God in purſuance of his unalterable Decrees to treat him according to his deſerts; we cannot doubt, I ſay, but that ſuch a Sinner ſhall certainly draw upon himſelf the favourable Mercy of ſo good a God as he whom

whom we adore. For, ſuch a Sinner is truly amiable; he augments the beauty of the Univerſe; he endeavours with all his might to re-enter into a ſtate of order, and he does effectually re-enter into it, his ſufferings being united to thoſe of Chriſt who alone is an atonement that is able to compaſs the glorious deſign of the general reſtoration of all things.

How great is the difference between a voluptuous and a repenting Sinner! Let us endeavour once more to give a lively Idea of it. A voluptuous perſon is a monſter who breaks all order, and ſpoils the beauty of the Univerſe; whereas a true penitent re-eſtabliſhes a ſtate of order, and reſtores to the Univerſe what he hath taken from it. A voluptuous Man is a Traytor who abuſes the goodneſs of his Soveraign, and who, being acquainted with his deſigns, does maliciouſly take advantages from them, to oblige him to actions that are unworthy of him; but a penitent Sinner is a faithful Servant who ſtudies the will of his Maſter, and is willing to undergo any ſufferings that it may be executed; one who makes ſuch a prudent uſe of the knowledge he has of his Lord's inclinations, that he obliges him in Juſtice to make him his Favourite. Finally, a voluptuous Man is a Malefactor who is perpetually committing new crimes; an obdurate Sinner who drinks up iniquity like water, and rejoyces in his wickedneſs; a caſt Devil whoſe doom is not yet pronounc'd; and a fatted Victim reſerv'd for the day of the Lord's vengeance, and to be the fuel of inextinguiſhable flames. On the other ſide, a true Penitent is a juſt perſon who fears Sin more than he loves Pleaſure; an humble and contrite Soul that is ſtill purifying it ſelf in bitterneſs and pain; a burnt ſacrifice of Love; a ſacrifice that is too pleaſing and too acceptable

able to the God to whom it is made to remain in the order of Juſtice, and which ſhall therefore be infallibly tranſlated to that of Mercy ; for, its puniſhment, being voluntary, cannot continue for ever.

We muſt not then delude our ſelves by imagining that Chriſt came into the World to free us from our obligations to Repentance. Chriſt did not come to overturn the order of things : The deſign of his coming was to ſuffer with Sinners, by his ſufferings to ſanctifie their Repentance, and render it well-pleaſing to God. He came to bear by the greatneſs of his Power that which Men could not bear by reaſon of the weakneſs of their Nature, the finiteneſs of their Being and unworthineſs of their Perſons. But he came not to excuſe them from Repentance ; far from that, he encourages them to ſuffer by his own Example, ſtrengthens them by his Grace, and inſtructs them by his Doctrine : For he has aſſured us that none but thoſe who follow him to the Death ſhall enjoy that Life which he merited for us by the loſs of his own. If any Man, ſays he, would riſe again with me, let him renounce his own Life, let him bear the inſtrument of his puniſhment, let him take up his Croſs and follow me ; for he that would ſave his Life ſhall loſe it. Nay, he even rebukes ſharply the greateſt of his Apoſtles, becauſe he would have diſſwaded him from ſuffering ; he calls him Satan, and commands him out of his preſence : *Mark* 8 33, 34, 35. *But when Jeſus had turned about, and looked on his diſciples, he rebuked Peter, ſaying, get thee behind me Satan ; for thou ſavoureſt not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men. And when he had called the people unto him with his diſciples alſo ; he ſaid unto them, whoſoever will come after me, let him deny himſelf, and take up his croſs and follow*

follow me. For whoſoever will ſave his life, ſhall loſe it, and whoſoever ſhall loſe his life for my ſake and the goſpels, the ſame ſhall ſave it. This is the Doctrine of the Eternal Wiſdom; this is the Advice which he gives not only to the Apoſtles, but to all Mankind in general. *And when he had called the people unto him with his diſciples alſo, he ſaid unto them, Whoſoever will come after me let him deny himſelf,* &c.

The Elevation of the Soul to G O D.

O *LORD, whoſe Will is ever effectual, and all whoſe Decrees are unchangeable, it is of thy bounty that we feel Pleaſure in the uſe of ſenſible things; but ungrateful Man loves that falſe good, and deſpiſes the true cauſe of his Happineſs; or rather, he is ignorant that thou, O Lord, alone art able to operate in him. It was wiſely ordered by thy Providence, that Man ſhould be able to diſcern, by ſhort and evident Proofs, whether he ſhould uſe or avoid the Bodies that ſurround him, that he might not be obliged to turn from thee, nor to fix his Mind upon thy Creatures. But he has abuſed thy Mercy to his own deſtruction; for thou, O God, art* not in all his thoughts: *He imagines that* matter *is the cauſe of all the Pleaſure which he feels, and therefore yields himſelf a ſlave to it, and makes it the only Object of his Thoughts and Affections. Thus what thou hadſt appointed to preſerve the Righteous Man in his Righteouſneſs ſerves now to harden the Wicked in their Wickedneſs. Is it juſt thou ſhouldſt work a Miracle for a ſinful wretch, O God? No, Lord, let thy Decrees remain fixt for ever; and woe be to thoſe that tempt thee. Let Men ſhun Poyſon if they would avoid Death. They can diſcern that Poyſon, for thou haſt taught them to know and avoid it.* But,

But, O thou Juſt and Merciful God, who dealeſt Righteouſly with thy Creatures, how ſhall we be able to hate Pleaſure? How hate what thou cauſeſt us to love? It is juſt that we ſuffer as Sinners; but can we love Pain which thou ſeemeſt to make us hate by an invincible Impreſſion? O Lord, whoſe Wiſdom is infinite, enable us perfectly to underſtand that thou art not contrary to thy ſelf, and that thy Wills do not imply contradiction; that Pleaſure, in it ſelf, is not abſolutely bad, and that the true cauſe that produces it, really deſerves and ought to be belov'd and reſpected; belov'd with all our Heart and Soul, and reſpected ſo as not to be conſtrain'd, in conſequence of his Will, to gratifie us, when, abſolutely ſpeaking, he ſhould puniſh us.

O Lord, who hideſt thy ſelf from our mortal Eyes, cauſe thy ſtrength, and the efficacy of thy will to exert themſelves, and do thou clearly and inceſſantly convince us that the Bodies which are on all ſides about us are abſolutely incapable of doing us either good or harm. Perhaps Men will love none but thee when they come to know that thou alone art able to do them good, and perhaps they will fear none but thee when they ſhall have rightly underſtood that thou alone haſt ſufficient ſtrength and power to cauſe them to ſuffer Pain.

But I beſeech thee, O my God, to deal with me in a more ſafe and merciful manner. I know that thy Creatures are not my good, yet I love them: I am convinc'd that whatever is round me cannot penetrate me, yet my Heart inſenſibly opens it ſelf, and expects to receive from the vileſt of thy Creatures what thou alone art able to give me. Therefore, O Lord, be pleaſed out of thy infinite Mercy, to deal with me in a more ſafe manner than thou doſt with thoſe who follow the Dictates of their Love. Oh ſet me apart from thy Creatures ſince they

turn

turn my Heart from thee. Draw my Eyes from fixing themſelves on ſenſible Objects, ſince I miſtake them for thee; or rather, ſince I love them inſtead of thee. This is the ſureſt means to remedy the diſorders in my Heart.

All my Philoſophy is not ſufficient to regulate my Love, and can only ſerve to accuſe and confound me before thee. It teaches me that I make uſe of the Order, to overthrow the Order; that I miſemploy thy Gifts by promoting what is ill; and that I make uſe of the immutability of thy Decrees meerly to reward Rebellion and other Crimes: It plainly ſhows me my Impiety and Injuſtice; but leaves me plung'd in it. I am ſtricken with horrour when I think on my ſelf, yet I cannot forbear loving my ſelf. So I procure thoſe Pleaſures to my ſelf which make me happy, at leaſt while I enjoy them. O God, how ſtupid and ſenſleſs am I not! I love my ſelf for a Moment, and ruine my ſelf for a whole Eternity: But I have a feeling ſence of that Moment, and I have none of Eternity. 'Tis true I think on it, and the Thought diſturbs my Joy; but alas! Pleaſure, though never ſo weaken'd by my Reflections, eaſily draws after its ſelf a Heart which it has already put into motion. Deprive me then, O my God, of all the Objects that flatter my Senſes and diſorder my Reaſon. While, as being the Author of Nature, thou makeſt me feel Pleaſure in the uſe of thoſe Objects, do thou, as thou art the Author of Grace, make me loath and abhor them. And I beſeech thee out of the abundance of thy Mercies, that at ſuch times as Pains are voluntary, thou mayſt make me ſuffer thoſe which my Crimes deſerve. O God, who canſt not let ſin remain unpuniſhed, make me continually return to the obſervance of the Order. Form me upon the model of thy

Son,

Son, crucifie me with him, and let his Croſs, that is only folly and weakneſs to the Eyes of Man, be all my Strength, all my Wiſdom and all my Joy.

O Jeſus! who waſt nail'd on the Croſs for my ſins, I am thine; nail and fix me there with thee; crucifie my Fleſh with its Paſſions and unruly Deſires; deſtroy this body of Sin, or by thy Grace deliver me from the ſtreſs of it that continually preſſes upon my Mind. We are baptized in thy Death: We are dead to all the things of this World: We are even buried with thee through Baptiſm: Our old Man, *according to thy great Apoſtle*, was crucified with thee, that the body of ſin might be deſtroy'd. *And wilt thou, O Lord, ſuffer this Old Man to live again, and this Body of Sin to ſubſiſt? O Saviour of the World, do thou finiſh the work which thou haſt begun! Continue to ſuffer in thy Members: Do thou in our Fleſh finiſh the Sacrifice which thou haſt begun in* Abel, *which thou didſt continue in the Patriarchs and Prophets, and to which thou wilt not put an end but by the Death of the laſt Member of thy Body, that is to be the laſt Saint whom thou wilt give to thy Church.*

O thou Bleſſed Spirit of Chriſt, thou Love of the Father and of the Son, diffuſe thy Charity through our Hearts, drive the ſervile fear of Slaves out of our Minds, and fill us with that Fear that is found in the Children, and which gives a Right to the Inheritance of our Father. Come, O thou Spirit of Comfort, ſoften the bitterneſs and diſtaſte which we find in Repentance; make us partake of the Sufferings of Chriſt, that we may alſo be made partakers of his Glory. But give

us at the same time some of that Heavenly Fire which thou didst shower down on the Apostles; that Fire which kindled in them an ardent Zeal to preach the Cross of Christ without Fear, and to suffer joyfully the shame of Whipping, the stress of Torments, and Death it self for Christ Jesus. Amen.

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